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THE CASE OF GERHART EISLER

SOME day we shall be told the whole story of Gerhart Eisler's voyage, including the details of the radio talks between the United States authorities and the Captain. On the issue of Eisler's extradition we must await the verdict of the British courts. There appears to be plenty of room for argument. According to precedent, the High Court will consider evidence to show whether extradition is demanded on account of a crime in the ordinary sense or whether the crime has a political character. In the past British courts have interpreted the right of asylum to cover assassinations or attempted assassinations when the motive of the assassin has been not personal but political.

This is matter for the courts. Our immediate concern is with the methods by which Eisler was seized on a Polish ship in British waters. Many questions need to be answered. Some of them were raised by the Polish Ambassador, some were put to the Home Secretary in the House of Commons. Was it according to usage for the police to drag Eisler off the ship without previously consulting the Polish Ambassador? Is there any precedent or excuse for the procedure by which, without so much as an attempt at courteous negotiation with the Captain, some twenty police boarded the *Batory* and detained the Captain under duress? Why—even more strange — were the police accompanied by American officials, and why were these officials permitted to relay to the Captain the State Department's threat of sanctions? Did the Home Office—or, as we suspect, only the Foreign Office —know of, or authorise, this drastic action? Mr. Chuter Ede explained in the House that the American Embassy had resorted to a legal procedure by which it could go direct to the Southampton magistrate with the demand that Eisler should be seized on the Polish vessel. If this procedure is normal, we must conclude that, if ever the Home Secretary wished a man to be extradited from the United States for a crime committed on British soil, then the British Consul in New York could present a *prima facie* case to a Manhattan Court and have him arrested by New York "cops" on a foreign ship in the Hudson. Or, to take a closely parallel case, if the Polish Embassy had wished to obtain the extradition of Mr. Mikolajczyk when he was in England, would the British authorities have arrested him, merely because the Polish Ambassador alleged to some local British magistrate that Mr. Mikolajczyk had been guilty of, say, taking from Poland property that did not belong to him?

These questions are of the greatest importance. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the extradition case against Eisler, the way that the police handled his arrest was calculated to create the impression that Britain is a colony whose Government must discard the traditions of its own country when American wishes are expressed. There are, of course, a small number of "imperialist" Americans who will be pleased that America should behave in this way and that Britain should acquiesce. But such Americans are not typical of the United States, where "imperialism" is not popular. Nor are the Americans who like such methods those whom it is worth while, from a moral or even for that matter an economic point of view, for a Labour Government to appease.

The Miners and the Board

Work has been resumed in the Lancashire coalfield, but on terms which hold a threat of further trouble, possibly on a wider scale. The fresh negotiations which were begun on the claim for concessionary coal soon ended. In deciding that the time was opportune to reopen negotiations on an official basis, and to resume work meanwhile, the delegates' conference at Bolton last Saturday "noted," with significant emphasis, that the National Executive of the N.U.M. supported the Lancashire demand for concessionary coal and that it "calls upon the N.C.B. at national level to bring about a satisfactory settlement." The N.C.B.'s offer to supply coal from Lancashire at dealer prices plus cost of cartage—*i.e.*, at 55s.-65s. a ton according to grade—had little chance of acceptance. It is possible that negotiations at "national level" may achieve some more sensible rationalisation of concessionary coal usage throughout the coalfields. Otherwise there is a grave danger that the strike—or an overtime ban —may be resumed next week. That this issue should have caused a stoppage which has already cost the men £500,000 in wages and the country 400,000 tons of coal is a shocking testimony to the strained relations existing between the N.C.B. and the miners. If further evidence were needed that things are far from well within the coal industry, it is to be found in a pamphlet published this week by the Fabian Society (*Miners and the Board*. 1s.). The report, studiously moderate in its comments, is based upon replies received to a questionnaire addressed to a small but representative sample of people well-placed for ascertaining and evaluating the general trend of opinion in the coalfields. The picture, which conveys the impression of careful sub-editing, is disquieting. With little knowledge of N.C.B. personalities, and still less confidence in individuals whose records are known, the miners are depicted as bitterly disappointed with the fruits of nationalisation—at any rate in the sphere of personnel relations. Their dissatisfaction extends to complaints that control by an over-staffed, bureaucratic Board is remote and inhumane; that the machinery for settling disputes works with intolerable slowness; and, perhaps even more important, that the mechanism of joint consulta-

tion has failed completely to give the rank and file the conviction either that they are furnished with knowledge of plans, costs and financial results to which they are entitled, or that they are accorded any real share of "responsibility."

Mr. Gaitskell's Opportunity

If the findings in this Fabian report are valid—and our impression is that the pamphlet tends to under-state, rather than over-state, the facts—it is clear that the N.C.B. has attached far too little importance, so far, to the problem of personnel relations within the industry. What can be done about it? The authors of the pamphlet suggest that, apart from possibly giving Divisions slightly more autonomy as "scheme-makers"—leaving a good many executive functions to the Areas—the most hopeful lines of action are twofold. On the one hand, the industry's officers and non-coms. must have better training in the technique of management as well as of production; and, to dispel current impressions of nepotism and favouritism, the Board should re-emphasise that its general policy is promotion from below. On the other hand, Consultative Committees at various levels, from pit to central administration, should be organically connected and include throughout a proportion of elected representatives; and the Committees should be given definite executive duties in connection with such subjects as training, recruitment and health. The question is whether the N.C.B., as at present constituted, will pay any attention to these recommendations. Much therefore depends on the appointment of new Board members which Mr. Gaitskell is to make when the Coal Mines Bill reaches the Statute Book. In his choice of individuals the Minister has a chance, perhaps the last chance, to persuade the miners that the Government's aim is to bring about in the coal industry genuine industrial democracy.

Mr. Wilson in Canada

Having arrived in Canada, Mr. Harold Wilson has lost no time in trying to assure the Canadians that Britain has no intention of maintaining bilateral trading arrangements any longer than it must in order to make ends meet. If, however, we are to escape from the need for such arrangements and to maintain our rate of food imports from Canada, the Canadians must in practice buy British goods to a considerably greater extent than hitherto. The dollar shortage is too acute for us to be able to maintain our purchases on any other basis. The withdrawal of Marshall dollars from use for purchases of Canadian wheat has already come near causing a crisis in Anglo-Canadian trade; and, when Marshall Aid ends, there will be no possibility of keeping up our imports from Canada, unless the Canadians, by buying British goods, provide us with the requisite means of payment. The Canadians, for their part, even if they could switch a part of their exports to the United States, would be quite unable by such means to offset the loss of the British market. At present, however, they are complaining that we are not sending them the types of goods they want and that our prices in some cases are not competitive.

Who is Bluffing?

Mr. Strachey's action in restoring the meat ration—by excluding corned beef from the total—is presumably a gesture as well as a sign of strength; it has to be taken in conjunction with the deadlock temporarily reached in the negotiations with Argentina. The Argentine Government, it is understood, has been demanding over 1s. a pound for its meat and Great Britain offering about 9d., as compared with the 7½d. payable under the Andes Agreement. In the absence of anything that can properly be called a world price, it is not surprising that so wide a difference should separate the negotiators; the real question is the value to be put on sterling as an international currency. Mr. Strachey evidently believes that the Argentinians are still bluffing and that, even if they can sell *some* meat at higher prices elsewhere, they cannot in the end afford to dispense with Britain as principal customer. President Peron, on the other hand, is probably reckoning that, even if the present negotiations break down, Britain cannot in the long run afford to do without Argentine meat—especially if the alternative is mainly American pork bought with Marshall dollars. On the whole, Britain has the stronger cards—provided Mr. Strachey's claim that he can hold out for the rest of the year is justified.

Point Four

Mr. Truman's Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Willard Thorp, has now drafted its plan for "Point Four"—the President's "bold new programme" for the development of backward areas. The plan, it appears, is to be put through Uno, with the U.S.A. offering half the finance and other "developed" countries being asked to provide one quarter; the balance is to come from the countries in which the development is to be undertaken. In its first phase the plan seems to be on a small scale, with a projected capital expenditure of only $100 million; but this is intended to pave the way for much larger subsequent investments of private capital. One reason given for a cautious beginning is the shortage of skilled personnel for carrying out the types of project—notably agricultural development—to which preference is to be given. A considerable list of such projects has already been drawn up by F.A.O., which considers that the necessary technical staff can be secured; and the Uno Secretariat has also been working on a schedule of non-agricultural projects. The real question is whether, even if Congress agrees to find the money for an approved preliminary scheme, large investment by American private enterprise will be possible except on terms which will look singularly like American economic imperialism to the proposed recipients of President Truman's help. American finance capital is not waiting for the legal enactment of "Point Four" before extending its empire. In Egypt, for example, American interests have recently acquired tobacco factories, textile enterprises, a power station and a large sugar refinery. Large French share-holdings in Egyptian banks have also passed lately into American hands.

China Changes Hands

Strategically, interest shifts from Shanghai, now closely invested, to the sensational speed with which Communist forces are penetrating Southern China. Meeting apparently little resistance, one column directed through Fukien is already within striking distance of the seaport of Foochow, opposite Formosa. Inland, General Liu Po-chang's army, having captured Hankow and Wuchang, is moving rapidly southwards through Kiangsi, and advanced elements are now reported to be within 200 miles of Canton, which the Kuomintang provincial government is preparing hastily to evacuate. On present indications it will be a matter of only a few weeks before the Communists reach the boundaries of Hong Kong's leased territories on the mainland. On the Island, serious problems are already been created by an influx of refugees from Canton, many of them in possesion of large sums of Hong Kong dollars, which they are seeking to sell for U.S. dollars in the free market. The result is that the value of the Hong Kong dollar has slumped; and, since it is officially pegged in relation to sterling, holders of American dollars are now able to buy pounds in Hong Kong at approximately half the official dollar-sterling rate—an awkward complication for Sir Stafford Cripps. It is clear that if Britain's economic interests both in Shanghai and Hong Kong are to be salvaged, no time should be lost in opening negotiations with Mao Tse-tung's administration. The time for *de facto* recognition may not yet have arrived—after all, the Communists have not yet proclaimed the establishment of an all-China government—but the case for establishing contact through some responsible (even if "unofficial") envoy is overwhelming.

European Socialism

The discussions at the Comisco meeting in Amsterdam were amiable but inconclusive. They demonstrated once more the difficulty of formulating an overall democratic Socialist policy for Europe. It is fairly easy for delegates from the various Socialist parties to make declarations of common principle, but any attempt to secure agreement on practical proposals immediately runs counter to specific national interests advanced by individual governments controlled or supported by member parties of Comisco. The French, for instance, want to strengthen the Council of Europe into a body with some supranational powers and to establish a Socialist caucus in the Strasbourg Assembly. The British delegates, aware of the Cabinet's opposition to such notions, felt obliged to dissent on grounds of "realism" from any scheme which might embarrass the Foreign Office. The final resolution did not commit any of its signatories to more than an agreement to be "guided by the legitimate interests of the working and the lasting purpose of international Socialism." This settles nothing. Similarly, in the debate upon the technical committee's proposals for the integration of Western European economies on a Socialist basis, the British delegates were blankly opposed to any idea of an international authority controlling wage rates, prices and investment policies. While this may be desirable in principle, the British argued, it is both impractical and inexpedient for Comisco to pass judgment upon a scheme devised by "experts" without "expert" consideration by each party concerned. Such "expert" discussions are to be held, but rather to stimulate ideas than to develop a definite policy for Comisco. The delegates have at least begun to raise fundamental questions, though they see no way of answering them at the moment. Comisco can continue to be a forum for exchanging views and settling minor matters. But can it become the agency for really unifying European Socialism? International Socialism has been wrecked before now on the rocks of "national" policies and sovereignty.

The Italian Socialists

The Comisco meeting, however, took one firm decision. The period of grace given the Nenni Socialists to break their ties with the Communists had expired. By withdrawing from Comisco, the Italian Socialists anticipated their formal expulsion. At the same time, their congress in Florence returned Signor Nenni and his Left associates to party leadership and turned down the pleas of the Centre and Right for an "autonomous" policy. After heated debates, a bare majority decided to continue the tactical alliance with the Communists. This decision may lead

to further defections from the Socialist Party to Signor Saragat's independent group. It is clear that the Italian Socialists have lost a good deal of ground, are in serious financial and organisational straits, and are having some difficulty in steering a course between Social-Democracy and Communism. If they go all the way with the Communists, why maintain an independent existence? Yet how can they keep the moderates in their ranks happy if there is no discernible difference between Signor Nenni's line and that of Signor Togliatti? This dilemma has split every congress of the party since 1943. It is the fundamental reason for its decline, the ardent Marxists going over to the Communists in considerable numbers and the Social-Democratic wing splintering away to the Right. Signor Nenni again leads the rump. But where does he hope to lead it?

Setback for Franco

The Assembly's vote on the resolution calling for a resumption of full diplomatic relations with Spain clearly reflected uneasiness on the part of the dissenting delegations lest this Latin-American proposal would prove, if accepted, to be the first step in the process of admitting the Franco regime to full partnership in the "democratic" Western Bloc. Although only 15 votes were cast directly against the resolution, there were 16 abstentions (including both the United States and Britain), so that the 26 affirmative votes were less than the required two-thirds majority. In justifying the British decision to abstain from voting, Mr. Hector McNeill argued, correctly enough, that the Assembly's 1946 resolution providing for the withdrawal of ambassadors had been ineffective and had failed to exercise "the right kind of pressure" on Franco. What alternative form of pressure the British Government would have preferred he did not indicate. He was able, however, to rebut convincingly the Polish accusation that Britain had been delivering war material to Franco. The British Government, he said, adheres strictly to the policy which it had decided on in October, 1945, that nothing should be supplied to Spain that would increase her military strength; and in March, 1947, an export licence had been refused in respect of an order for 400 aero engines which a Spanish firm had placed in this country with the intention of installing the engines in Spanish-built bomber air frames. So far, so good. But the question how the Franco dictatorship is to be lifted from the backs of the Spanish people is one which the Assembly shows no signs of willingness to tackle in earnest.

The Powers and Germany

When the Foreign Ministers meet in Paris on Monday, they will have to consider one new factor which has arisen in Germany: the elections to the People's Congress in the Russian Zone have revealed, not surprisingly, a substantial anti-Russian vote. Out of twelve million valid votes cast, eight million were in favour of the S.E.D. and its slogan of "a just peace and a united Reich," and four million said "No" to the list of Communist-sponsored candidates. On the assumption that these are valid figures—and it is difficult to see why, if the returns were faked, the Russians should have chosen to produce figures scarcely indicative of impressive support for their cause—the question is whether the voting will make Mr. Vyshinsky more or less inclined to view favourably the proposal which the Western Powers seem likely to make, that the Bonn Constitution (now approved, with minor reservations, by the Military Governors) should be extended to the whole of Germany. Since the Constitution leans far in the direction of *Land* autonomy, the Russians might have seen no serious objections to attaching their Zone to a weak Federal Centre, provided they were confident that they could secure an absolutely reliable majority in the Eastern *Laender*. Will they now feel such confidence? We imagine that they will, at any rate, be less disposed than ever to assent to having "free" elections in the Western sense in their Zone; but the Western Bloc will presumably argue that the voting for the People's Congress strengthens the case for demanding full scope for the S.P.D. and the C.D.U. to organise freely there. Meanwhile, though supplies of food and material are pouring into the Western sectors of Berlin, inter-zonal trade is still confined to barter in default of an agreed exchange rate between Western and Eastern marks. In Bizonia the Germans have launched a new campaign to save from dismantling the six enormous synthetic oil plants which Hitler built for war purposes, and Dr. Adenauer has made a speech declaring that national unity must not be purchased at the price of "freedom." Clearly, the big German industrialists would be as opposed as the Americans to giving the Soviet Union any share in the Ruhr Authority.

As France Sees It

Our Paris correspondent writes: On the eve of the Big Four Conference, the French are not feeling happy. Disclosure of the so-called Kennan Plan, under which only a small number of American and British troops would remain in Germany, while the Soviet and French forces would be entirely withdrawn, aroused bitter anger here. Although Dr. Jessup, on arriving in Paris, lost no time in assuring the French that this scheme had been dropped by the State Department, the very fact that such proposals could even have been considered suggests to the French that their security is threatened by a dangerous demagogic competition in generosity to the Germans. The fear that the "Anglo-Americans" are preparing to "build up a Fourth Reich" is not limited to the de Gaullists, but pervades all parties.

The French are paying a good deal of attention to signs that the Germans are again hankering after a Führer; and they suspect that Dr. Adenauer is grooming himself for that rôle. His recent declaration that "the German people are quite capable of running their own affairs" made a bad impression here; and it is thought that he was largely responsible for the choice of Bonn as the West German capital. He was in favour of Bonn, it is said, precisely because—apart from being the birthplace of Beethoven—Bonn has no glamour and is eminently unsuitable as a capital. Its selection, therefore, is designed to emphasise the provisional nature of the West German State.

As the French see it, the West Germans—whose reaction to the West German State is remarkably unenthusiastic—are to-day playing at democracy: the aim would be to achieve a state of affairs in which Adenauer "will be free to make an uncensored public speech in Leipzig." Where does this lead? To a unified, unrepentant Germany? The French attach sinister importance to the activities of Herr Nadolny, formerly German ambassador in Moscow, and the contacts which he has established with the Christian Democrats in the course of Russian-sanctioned visits to Bizonia. The French believe that the Christian Democrats are quite likely—much more likely than the Social-Democrats—at some stage to make a deal with the Russians—as usual, at the expense of France.

PARLIAMENT: Freedom and Licensees

Wednesday

Few Bills have ever been as travestied by their opponents as the Licensing Bill, which had its Third Reading this week. No sooner was the Bill published than caravans of publicans, inspired by the brewers, converged on Westminster to protest against nationalisation that was never intended. Customers' petitions, still wet with closing-time beer, arrived with each post at the House, praying that "the brewers shouldn't be nationalised." But the campaign recoiled. The licensees who came to complain about nationalisation, stayed to complain about tied-houses.

On the Third Reading, Maxwell-Fyfe, with his sombre sincerity, advanced a case which the brewers by their misrepresentations and all-in tactics had done almost everything to discredit. "Let the people be free to decide the beer they want," he said, in effect; and looked up in surprise when all the Labour Members laughed. "Set the public-houses free," Bing replied. Bing, who has led the fight against the tied-house system is not loved by the leaders of the Trade. What the word "brewers" is to the teetotal Hudson, "Bing" is to the brewers. They can easily deal with passionate, abolitionist speeches like Hudson's on the Third Reading; they will even pay tribute to his conscience. But Bing is a nuisance, a man who likes beer but not brewers; a schismatic who competes with them for the soul of the beer-drinker; a sacrilegious intruder into the private places of the Trade; and a good debater.

Bing quoted from letters addressed to him by licensees in support of the Bill. He differed in this from Boyd-Carpenter, who quoted from private correspondence between Braddock, the Labour Member for Mitcham and one of Braddock's constituents. The House didn't take well to this. It is true that a public man's private letters may be a matter of public interest. But for a pressure-group to arrange for a letter-writer to extract a reply from a Member—that is not quite above board.

When Braddock established that Boyd-Carpenter's snippet was taken out of context, Boyd-Carpenter would have done better to have dropped an issue that had become unsavoury.

As this Parliament moves to a jaded end, the Labour benches are discovering new debaters. Nally, speaking from behind the Home Secretary, made a tearing, completely successful attack on the brewers and the brewers' Party. With a wave of his hand, he disposed of one interrupter as a third-rate barrister; of another as an unreliable journalist; and of a third as a bore who shouldn't waste his time when he was making a speech. But since he strewed a few compliments to other Tories, he was heard with good humour on all sides. The debate was wound-up by Chuter Ede, the total abstainer who had made such good provision for better drinking. As the modern proverb says, "Even an Ecclesiastical Commissioner may collect rents in Paddington."

Like the Temperance Debate, the Irish question has with time lost much of its bitterness. The partisans have become older—more feeble or more elevated. The young men, learning from their fathers' experience, are more cautious. No one could doubt that the general provisions of the Ireland Bill were generous and helpful to Irishmen in this country. And Sir Patrick Hannon spoke for everybody when he praised the Prime Minister's goodwill in the matter.

Yet the restiveness against partition was expressed in the amendments, opposing the Government's guarantees to Northern Ireland, though to some extent the votes were merely formal protest. The Third Reading of the Bill was a sullen burying of the hatchet.

No one was really happy; neither Imperial Tories, nor anti-partitionists nor Ulstermen. To Savory, the Member for Belfast University, in a speech that went back to Nelson, it seemed that Southern Ireland had been given too much; to Beattie, the Labour Member for West Belfast, in a funeral oration, the Government seemed to have given too little. But no one wanted to fight, and the House gave its approval to the Bill with a grunt and without a division.

MAURICE EDELMAN

THE GENTLE ART

THOSE who hoped that the Government's narrow escape from defeat in last January's debate would modify its Palestine policy underestimated the bulldog prejudices of Mr. Bevin. All that was achieved on that occasion was the prevention of actual hostilities between Britain and Israel. But the Foreign Secretary's policy of cribbing and confining the Jewish State has continued unabated, though the methods have changed from military threats to economic constraint. Meanwhile, British representatives at Lake Success fought to prevent the admission of Israel to the United Nations, only to receive the inevitable diplomatic rebuff when the two-thirds majority was duly achieved despite them.

The unremitting feud against the Zionists would at least be intelligible if it were part of a deliberate policy designed to retain—or to regain—the friendship of the Arab States. But it is not. In the self-same week that Britain was fighting against Israel's admission to Uno, the announcement was made of the Bevin-Sforza agreement: Tripolitania, after all, should be put under Italian trusteeship. The result has been prolonged anti-British rioting in Tripoli where infuriated Arabs have paraded the streets shouting "Long live Gromyko." Once again Mr. Bevin has simultaneously antagonised both Jews and Arabs, and confirmed the impression that British Middle Eastern policy consists of a series of evasive double-crosses. We have now discarded all our friends with the exception of the loyal Senussi, who provide us with a convenient reason for retaining Cyrenaica as a military base after the withdrawal from Palestine.

The violence of Arab reactions to our sudden *volte face* on the Tripoli issue was fully justified. Ever since 1945 it had been well known that the French, as well as the Latin-Americans, would oppose a British trusteeship, and that this would make the necessary two-thirds majority almost impossible in view of the attitude of the Eastern Bloc. The French believe that British appeasement of Arab nationalism in Tripolitania would spread disaffection among the Arabs in adjacent Tunisia. They prefer the Italians as neighbours in North Africa because both countries stand for a policy of settling Europeans on the land.

Despite French opposition and the hostility to British policy of the important Italian and Jewish communities in the country, we had let it be known that we intended to stay in Tripolitania; and the Arab inhabitants, judging from the precedents in the Middle East, believed that a British trusteeship would mean early independence for them. The Bevin-Sforza agreement, therefore, must seem to them to be another British betrayal, as dastardly as our support for sanctions against the invading Arab armies in Palestine last June. The pattern is closely similar. First, we seem to uphold their claims; then, for purely opportunist reasons, we leave them in the lurch. For the sake of Arab friendship, it would have been far better, if we were finally going to concur in Italian trusteeship, never to have given the impression that we were opposed to it. If there is one character the Arab despises more than any other it is the man who gives his word and then withdraws it to suit his own convenience. They feel passionately that this is just what Mr. Bevin did in Palestine. Now he has done it again in North Africa—only to suffer yet another defeat at Lake Success, where the Bevin-Sforza deal has been speedily repudiated.

Our relations with Israel are equally unsatisfactory. The Cabinet only granted *de facto* recognition after the humiliating scene in the House of Commons. Instead of an act of generosity, it came as a concession to circumstances. Now a long and futile bicker on the precise status of Mr. Helm has preceded his departure to Tel Aviv. The unprecedented result is that he and the Israeli Representative here are to rank as Ministers, although we still refuse to grant *de jure* recognition! This sort of diplomatic silliness would not matter very much if British trade, which was suddenly halted by the summary expulsion of Israel from the sterling bloc and by our hostile attitude during the Palestine war, had been permitted to revive. But it has not. Haifa port is full of ships from almost every country in the world except Britain. The refinery which, if permitted to operate, could reduce our need for dollar oil and possibly remove the necessity for petrol rationing, still stands idle—though it is not denied that we could supply it by tanker so long as the Iraqi block the pipe-line. Lastly, the French and Belgian airlines run highly remunerative services to Lydda, from which B.O.A.C. is self-excluded.

During 1949 Israel plans to import essential goods to the value of £80 million. No less than 30 million dollars are being spent on American tractors and 5 million on American telecommunication equipment, though the Israeli would prefer to continue to buy British. Other items in the programme include ships, pre-fabricated houses in large quantities, motor vehicles, printing and textile machinery. At present these goods are being bought largely in the U.S.A., as well as France, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Italy and Czechoslovakia. In the past, Britain was the chief supplier of capital goods for Palestine, and many millions of pounds were sunk in industrial development. Now, when a new and far more intense phase of development has begun, we are virtually self-excluded from the market.

Much depends on the result of the negotiations now proceeding in London between British and Israeli Treasury officials. The issue of Israel's re-admission to the sterling area is not under discussion; the Israeli are exclusively concerned to obtain a release of a portion of their frozen sterling assets, and they have made it clear that they are ready to spend a large proportion of the sterling on British goods. Naturally they want to conserve their dollars, and it is only because they are unable to trade with Britain that they are purchasing American tractors, telephone exchanges, lorries, and other equipment. With the increasing difficulty of finding markets for our exports, the negotiations should be rapidly concluded. It would pay us to be generous so that British firms could be enabled to obtain their fair share of this important and expanding market. A Treasury agreement should be followed by a trade treaty. But shall we achieve either? That depends very much on the Foreign Secretary.

THE UNFAIR DEAL

PRESIDENT TRUMAN and the present Congress first confronted each other in January. Since then, they have been presenting a continuous performance of the traditional American morality play called "The Separation of Powers." The President, inspired by the success of his one-man show, clearly believed that he was entitled to the leading role and that a new version, written around his Fair Deal theme, should have the Washington stage this season. A majority in Congress has thought otherwise. Unable to avoid discussion, at least, of Mr. Truman's script, it has chosen to tear it to pieces. In four months it has been content to trundle out the familiar stage props which the Constitution provides as obstacles to a coherent reform programme. It is an old act, which recalls the Supreme Court's melodramatic treatment of the New Deal, but it is nonetheless effective for the moment.

Politically, both the sympathies and the behaviour of the 81st Congress have been very close to those of its Republican predecessor against which the President campaigned so vehemently last autumn. Though the liberals in both House and Senate were strengthened by some notable successes at the elections, they remain a minority, doomed either to make ineffectual protests on principle or else to compromise principle in order to secure legislative concessions. Faced by the familiar coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats, the President must leave the attempt to pass his programme to friends of the Administration in Congress, helping them as best he can by whipping up public support and by using his patronage powers to coerce or court the waverers. In both respects, Mr. Truman has proved himself much less adept than President Roosevelt. He threatened, in his Jackson Day speech, to stump the country again. He warned recalcitrant Democrats that they might be denied their share of the spoils. But he has failed to persuade his antagonists in his own Party that it is time to come to terms. President Truman, in fact, like so many residents of the White House, has discovered that Congress will accept leadership only in a crisis. This explains why he has received bi-partisan support for his foreign policy and for rearmament; it also explains why his domestic programme has been successfully obstructed.

The cards are always stacked against a reforming President. The seniority rules, which ensure that in a Democratic Congress all the key committees are dominated by ageing men from the South, make him dependent on his opponents for legislative support. When Mr. Truman plunged headlong into the civil rights issue, he made sure that the most powerful members of his own party would fight back at him along the whole line of his programme. He has insisted that they should support the accepted platform of the party. But they care much less for "party loyalty" than for their own hopes of re-election, for regional interests, for the influence of powerful pressure-groups or for special commitments they may individually have assumed. In Congress, political survival is normally the primary objective: a man must balance his loyalties nicely.

It is this that gives rise to so much argument about mandates. The President—chosen in a national plebiscite—believes that he is the tribune of the people; but he must reconcile as best he can the competing claims of Negroes, organised labour, the farmers and other voting groups to have been the decisive factor in his election. Each Senator and Representative however can also argue that *he* has a personal mandate, which may differ widely from the President's. Just how much it differs will depend, in part, upon whether he rode into Congress on the coat-tails of the President. Obviously, John Rankin of Mississippi and Senator Byrd of Virginia are under no electoral compulsion to support the Fair Deal planks in President Truman's platform. They,

like the other Southerners who make up a considerable and influential part of President Truman's nominal Democratic majority in Congress, do not owe their presence in Washington to the vote-getting powers of the President. They would be there even if the Republicans had swept the rest of the country. As long as they can win the Democratic nomination, their tenure is secure, for that nomination is all they require in the single-party system of the South. To win that nomination, they must remain loyal to the Southern political canon, which means obstruction of every measure that offers a real or apparent threat to White Supremacy. Some of them are liberals on all but race issues, but for them social questions are subordinate to the all-important Negro problem. If they wish to form an obstructive coalition with the Republicans, there is little the President can do to stop them. The Republicans hate the Fair Deal: the Southerners hate the civil rights programme. If they stand together, they can block both of the President's objectives, though the Republicans may be on record for civil rights and the Southerners may support much of the Fair Deal.

The collapse of Mr. Truman's offensive against the Taft-Hartley Act provides an excellent illustration of this point. In his bid for the labour vote, the President time and again committed himself to the repeal of the Act. Early this year, after much consideration, he sent a new labour Bill along to Congress, which then held long hearings upon the draft. But there is still a majority in the House, some 226 members, who voted for the Taft-Hartley Act two years ago. This majority, joined by some newcomers, is still hostile to organised labour and had little stomach for the new Bill, sponsored by John Lesinski, which replaced the Taft-Hartley Act by a modified version of the New Deal's Wagner Act. The Republican and Southern Democrat coalition offered the Wood amendment, which virtually deleted all the clauses of Lesinski's Bill and re-enacted the Taft-Hartley Act while repealing it in name. At the last moment, when the Wood amendment seemed likely to pass, a technical manoeuvre postponed the vote overnight. The Administration then managed to switch ten Southerners to its side and defeated it by only three votes. The victory was hollow. The Taft-Hartley Act remains law until an alternative is passed.

The last election, if it gave anything, gave a clear mandate for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act. The *New York Times* agrees—with a proviso. Last week, it pointed out that the only specific labour pledge the Democratic Party gave in its platform was simply "to repeal" the Act. The three Bills before the House all proposed to do that, although two of them retained everything but the name. Thus a Democrat could vote for any one of them without any abrogation of his party loyalty. After eulogising this semantic chicanery, the *Times* solemnly warned the Administration that "if it insists upon employing the borrowed time to carry the ball, legislatively, for uncompromising labour leaders . . . then nothing can save it . . . from major political disaster." The mandate, in short, never really existed. No doubt the conservative press and the reactionary section of Congress will be able to conjure away the rest of the Fair Deal in the same fashion. Where necessary, the Senate can do the trick as effectively as it disposed of civil rights legislation.

What will Mr. Truman's answer be? Probably he now realises that he is fighting a lost battle with this Congress, though he may hope to squeeze through compromises on a few social measures, such as Federal Housing and Education. His strategy seems to be to force his opponents to go on record against each item in his programme and to arouse public discussion of them. Then, having familiarised the electorate with the Fair Deal proposals and with the sabotage of them by Congress, he will be able to campaign personally against those obstructionists who are defending their seats in the mid-term elections next year.

There are obvious dangers in this manoeuvre, because this Congress, unlike the last one, is nominally controlled by *his own* party. But it may succeed if the President can keep the pot of resentment boiling. Labour, incensed by the retention of the Taft-Hartley Act in the face of an indisputable mandate to repeal it, will extend its organised political activity against "reactionary Congressmen." In each of his present fights, such as that over his social medicine proposals, the President now seems to be thinking of the record rather than of immediate gains. He may be right. If he can convince the American people that this Congress has given him and them an Unfair Deal, he may get a better Congress next year. But that means driving further down the unmapped road that leads to a decisive reconstruction of the Democratic Party.

THE NEW TOWNS

After some two years of preliminary work, several of the New Towns are now beginning to build their first permanent dwellings. At Harlow, for instance, the first group of 98 houses is under construction, and all the other towns designated for the London overspill have made a start, except Hatfield; while at Newton Aycliffe, near Darlington, 41 families are already housed in permanent pre-fabs. "About time, too," is probably the reaction of the ordinary man. He sees nothing of the preliminary work: the sewage problem alone is enormous, and there are more obscure difficulties, such as disposal of surface water after storms. And in any case two years is none too long to prepare the plans for a town in which people may have to live for twenty or thirty generations.

Certainly there have been mistakes and delays. Stevenage, handicapped by having three Corporation chairmen in two years, seems unable to finalise its master plan, and is being overtaken by later starters. At Crawley, Thomas Sharp's original plan was abandoned, and a tighter, more economical version designed. At Hemel Hempstead, where there are 20,000 existing inhabitants, intense opposition developed against the proposed new town-centre, which involved scrapping many existing buildings and creating an impressive water-garden and shopping-street; much of Jellicoe's imaginative, if controversial, plan disappeared in the attempt to reach a compromise. Most serious of all, the entire programme at Peterlee, in County Durham, has been held up while the possibility of subsidence owing to coal-workings is being investigated. Despite Ministerial protestations to the contrary, this does not seem to have been taken into serious consideration when the site was chosen, and the fate of the whole plan may depend upon the expert report, which is now being analysed.

In addition to these individual setbacks, there have also been shocks of another kind, affecting all the Development Corporations equally. Chief of these is the discovery that the Corporations are far less powerful than had been imagined. Though on paper they have wide powers, for everyone of their schemes they have to obtain the approval of other bodies, notably the County Council. And while the Development Corporations claim that it is precisely their job to try new experiments, County Planning Officers have proved reluctant to sanction any departure from customary standards, partly no doubt because they fear that others in their bailiwick will then claim similar privileges, but still more (some New Town planners allege) because they lack imagination. What makes the situation especially delicate is that the New Towns tend to employ younger men, school-trained and experimentally inclined, who see their plans vetoed by older men whose chief experience is legal and administrative rather than creative. Naturally, morale suffers.

But the roots of the problem go much deeper than the abilities of County Planning Officers; they extend to the by-laws upon which they have to depend. These were designed to curb the speculative builder, assumed to be devoid of public spirit; applied to men whose good intentions are assured they prove a strait-jacket. Thus, in a case where houses were to be built on the southern margin of a road, the New Town planners proposed that they should be placed a few feet nearer the road, and that the space thus gained should be added to the sunny garden at the back, where it would yield greater practical benefit than in the shadow on the north. The County Council, however, could not sanction any departure from the standard building line.

Another severe limitation under which the New Towns are working is financial. Since they must balance their accounts, the rent of houses and shops must carry the cost of all the new roads, parks, civic buildings and the Corporation itself, except in so far as special grants are available. The Corporations cannot call upon additional rate contributions, or equalise the rents of pre- and post-war housing. In practice, many of them are thinking of charging between 25s. and 33s. a week for subsidised houses, and even at this figure only terrace houses of a rather uninspiring type can be provided, whereas the preferred house is semi-detached. But it will be remembered that in the Willesden survey 69 per cent. of the respondents named sums below 25s. as the most they would be prepared to pay if they were a tenant in a New Town, and 12 per cent. named sums under 14s. The architect replies that it is the last 3s. of rent which provides the amenities. Face a man with two actual houses, so that he can see what he is getting for the extra 3s., and he will be eager to pay the additional sum. On the other hand, the sociologist suggests that no one should spend more than one-fifth of their income on rent—which puts these houses outside the reach of everyone getting the national average wage or less. If the New Towns are to get over this hurdle, the State will probably have to make a special subsidy.

These physical problems, however, are not the most serious. Big difficulties are those of creating a vigorous community spirit. The Corporations are fully aware of the problem: how to escape the desperately grey, devitalised atmosphere of the housing estate without falling into the smug paternalism of a Bournville or a Port Sunlight. But as to how this is to be done they have only a few, unreliable clues. Chief of these is the concept of the "neighbourhood unit" and a touching faith in the magic of community centres. The term "neighbourhood unit" sheds a pleasing aura of neighbourliness on the mechanical proposition that towns should be chopped up into more or less self-contained units of about 10,000 people. No one seems to know how this figure was arrived at, and it is reasonably objected that this number of people constitutes a

town the size of Lichfield or Abingdon, and not a neighbourhood at all. In point of fact, the Aycliffe team has come by four or five different paths to the conclusion that 2,000 people form a natural social unit: conveniently enough, they provide just enough infants to support one nursery school; and, at approved housing densities, occupy an area such that no one need be more than a quarter of a mile from the nearest shops. They even make a neat round for a milkman.

Again, the success of very small community centres serving only a few hundred people, such as Currock House, at Carlisle, suggests that the New Towns might do better to have a large number of small centres, instead of a single large one for the whole town. Community spirit is built out of a vast number of face-to-face groupings; and, by drawing people out of such local groupings, a civic community centre may actually reduce cohesion, not increase it. Further, all anthropological research stresses the importance of kinship in binding communities together, but the New Towns' policy of importing single families, whenever there is a job for the principal wage-earner, ensures that such groups of kin shall be broken up—with adverse effects for the "exporting boroughs" also.

The real trouble is lack of adequate basic research and, above all, research into the kind of life people want to lead and the kind of life which fosters happiness. In the absence of a factual background, the Corporations can only specify for cinemas, shopping centres, day nurseries and so forth, and hope for the best. In the last few months a sociological research unit has been established at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning under Dr. Ruth Glass (the appointment is temporary); but the complaint of the Corporations is that they cannot wait for results. They have to act now.

If it is hard to create corporate unity, it will be still harder to provide the new communities with a sense of purpose, a sense of being part of a great cultural tradition, a sense of the "numinous." Perhaps this can in part be done (as Henry Morris has sought to show in his village colleges in Cambridgeshire) by building social life round the educational centre, and making that centre something much more than a mere processing plant for human beings. Here Crawley should be able to set the pace, for Minoprio has grouped its educational buildings in campuses shared between two or three neighbourhood units. But it certainly cannot be done unless the community is given, at the earliest moment, the maximum responsibility for its own development. Enthusiasm and determination to achieve something really outstanding permeates the Corporations; but too many of them conceive their task in paternalist (I had almost written maternalist) terms. In referring to the inhabitants, actual or prospective, they invariably say "they" and not "we," and they look forward to handing the town over to the Council as a going concern at the end of twenty years.

There are, of course, exceptions. Harlow is showing the better way here by many small initiatives. Peterlee, starting with the advantage of being created in response to popular demand, has made good use of door-to-door surveys and other techniques for enlisting intelligent participation. But much more needs to be done, and a fresher wind must blow through the country mansions of the Corporations—often physically as well as intellectually remote from the people for whom they are planning—if this enormous social venture is to achieve the outstanding success which lies so nearly within its reach.

GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR

A LONDON DIARY

"THIS business about Zilliacus takes the guts and go out of other people" said a worker to me this morning. That, I think, is a typical comment. Zilliacus may have a name that sounds like a telegraphic address and he disagrees with Mr. Bevin. But why not? So do quite a lot of people who keep quiet. Of course, if an M.P. is really a "crypto-Communist," if he travels with the Communists and not with the Labour party, then he ought to join the party he believes in. But everyone knows that Zilliacus is not only Labour, but loyally and enthusiastically Labour. He is very bad at presenting his case; he seems to think that the rank and file are interested in legal points and in the contrast between what Ministers said in the past and what they do when they are in office. This delusion appears again in his latest, in many ways remarkable, pamphlet, *Dragon's Teeth*. In short, Zilliacus is an eccentric, for whom we all have affection, even when he annoys us. The party cannot afford to lose its Zilliacuses. About Solley I should speak differently, merely regretting that the party does not feel rich enough to be able to afford to keep him. As for the five Parliamentary Private Secretaries, there appears to have been a genuine misapprehension. Mr. Attlee was not in a mood to permit those singled out for advancement to vote against the Government, even in Committee stage. Certainly they would have been wiser to "abstain," even if they felt as unhappy as I do about a Labour Government having to guarantee so intolerant an administration as that which rules the Six Counties. The careers of such excellent back-benchers as Mr. S. P. W. Mallalieu will not, however, be permanently blighted by this setback.

* * *

In a remarkable statement to the *News Chronicle* last Saturday, Mr. Morgan Phillips revealed that "he was relieved that Labour's losses in the local elections were fewer than he had feared." I doubt whether it will prove much consolation to the Labour Party in Holborn, for instance, or in Birmingham, to hear that the General Secretary in Transport House expected an even more devastating defeat. It is true that in Scotland and in certain rural and urban districts net losses were small, and that in many boroughs, even though councillors were unseated, Labour polled a higher vote than in the debacle of November, 1947. But this does not provide any reason why responsible people in Transport House should publicly indulge in statistical self-exculpation. In this test of strength between Lord Woolton's and Mr. Phillips' machines, which each of them announced to be of the very greatest importance, Mr. Phillips was decisively beaten. It makes things no better to hear that Mr. Phillips expected to be even more decisively beaten.

* * *

The easy prescription is "to overhaul the Labour machine." But there is not much wrong with the organisation of Transport House, the regional offices and the paid agents. The failure of Morgan Phillips is that he has been so busy on international affairs or on planning propaganda campaigns to the farmers and the middle class—who are anyway not interested in party propaganda—that he has neglected the morale of the party's active supporters. To defend a Labour Government or Labour Council from attack, what is needed first and foremost is the political education of the party member. And it must be education, not propaganda. An opposition party can exploit disgruntlement; it is far more soul-satisfying to campaign against austerity than to explain why it is necessary, and it is a far easier occupation. No knowledge is required in order to "expose" that the meat ration under Mr. Strachey has fallen to miserable proportions or to "prove" that the cost of electricity in the first winter after nationalization was exorbitant. But it demands a great deal of education to explain why Mr. Strachey has failed to reach agreement with Senor Perón or, alternatively, to buy meat from elsewhere; and it demands something more than education to justify Mr. Gaitskell's surcharge on electricity. To-day, fine phrases are not enough—except for armchair or saloon bar Socialists. The Minister who wins the applause of a regional conference with a dashing piece of class-war "knock-about" does the party no service, since he fails to equip its members with the answers to the searching questions they will be asked in the queue and in the factory. That seems to me the real moral of the local elections.

* * *

Last week I described the good, clean fun involved in introducing party—that is non-Conservative—politics into Parish Council elections. Judging from correspondents, the same surprise and petulance have been displayed in many villages at similar efforts to dilute the gentry's monopoly with representatives of the poorer citizenry. Confronted with this revolutionary proposal one would have expected the Old Guard to prove the sincerity of their non-party protestations by welcoming representatives of other parties on the Council. I cannot find that this has been their response. On the contrary, they have put up a full quota of party representatives to fight all anti-Conservative candidates. In my village and judging from letters, in many other cases, they then carried out a house-to-house canvass and organised with great efficiency a drive to see that every Conservative voter got to the polls and was instructed to vote for the five sitting candidates. (This is no great task of organisation if you have plenty of cars and only a few hundred houses to visit.) There was, of course, some cross-voting, but in general people voted the party list. The five anti-Conservatives were, therefore, all placed below the entrenched gentry. The result was achieved by straight party organisation—though, it should be added, the poll was headed by one candidate who certainly received a personal popular vote. Where the challenge to the existing order was more dangerous (for instance, in a village not very far away) some of the younger supporters of the gentry adopted familiar Fascist tactics, getting up at meetings on the eve of the poll and asking whether a Labour candidate, who was, in fact, a Londoner, was not in fact "some kind of Central European." Smearing of this kind easily leads to violence. In my village they kept the party clean—but they took good care to keep it Tory.

* * *

You can still buy expensive lines of chocolate in swanky shops, and sometimes in the country the children are still sucking acid drops and fruit gums. In town, many sweet shops give out after a few hours and put up their shutters. In short, we are just about where we were in the early days of the war when people with time to stand in queues and money to pay for luxuries hogged the chocolates and sweets for themselves. We abolished this unrationed and irrational system because injustice was admittedly bad for "morale of the masses." In wartime, Labour demanded "fair shares," which surely remains the only tolerable principle. Until the 1949

Budget and the abolition of sweet rationing the Labour woman with her shopping basket over her arm was still able to reply to her grousing neighbour that under this Government everyone could get his or her share of the necessities of life, and even of some comparative luxuries like chocolates and sweets. This has been Labour's greatest moral asset. The justification for abolishing sweet rationing was presumably that the shortage was over. It was not. The public appetite has now compelled the Ministry to release large supplies of sugar. John Strachey must have seen to what fair harbour the Government was drifting when the *Economist* drew the logical conclusion that the way to bring sweets back into the shops is to increase the price!

* * *

Mr. Anthony West propounds in our correspondence columns a conundrum designed to test the ingenuity of the political theoretician. Without permitting myself to get involved in the familiar dispute about "ethics in the class struggle," I should say that the practical answer would run as follows: In the first case we accept some loss of liberty to the individual anarchist involved in the "closed shop" because of the greater liberty and general advantage to all workers (in which the anarchist himself participates) resulting from trade union solidarity. In the second case we object, holding that to exclude a worker from his job because of his membership of a political party violates the basic principle that a man's *opinions and life outside his work* are his own.

* * *

I am told that Colonial Governors now have to send special monthly reports on progress in combating Communism. It follows that Communism has to be found even among Natives who have never heard of it, but who may be restive because of bad conditions, repression and exploitation. The best story arising from this odd situation is told of Lord Baldwin, whose faults, you will recall, included failure to fulfil instructions and to supply required reports. In response to repeated signals for his anti-Communist report, the story runs, Lord Baldwin signalled back: "No Communists, so no report. No Socialists, only me." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.
Paste entries on a POSTCARD and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Your correspondent who was glad to hear the News announcer say "Good morning, everybody" may be interested to know that every morning during the war, when these three words came over the air, it was the custom in a munition factory I knew for a staff of three hundred to reply "Good morning, Sir," and there was an exchange of smiles all round. That incident did more to make the staff work than anything else conceivable.—Letter in *Radio Times*. (R. Gray.)

When Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Birmingham B.I.F. to-day the Princess put a special poser to Mr. W. A. McLellan, director of Claters and Stampers, Ltd., of Burnley.

"My father wants to know how to clean a kettle," she said.—*Manchester Evening News*. (M. Craingold.)

Stated to have given a constable "a hefty punch" after a declaration of poll in which a Fascist candidate was defeated, a woman said at Old Street, London, yesterday, that she thought the policeman "was one of the Communists."—*Daily Worker*. (Ethel Heath.)

Edinburgh's Director of Education, referring to sex education, is reported to have said: "Teachers noticed a new look in children's eyes after an experimental course."—Letter in *Sunday Express*. (A. D. Paterson.)

Carefree, inclusive holidays for all. Good food. Resident Dance Band. Tuck Shops. Snack and Soft Drinks Bars. Escalator to Promenade. All Sports. No joint accommodation for married couples.—Advert. in *News Chronicle*. (Joyce Johnson.)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Large signs bearing the station names in 12-inch letters are to be fixed at the incoming ends of platforms.—Railway Executive, May 11th.

Yet once more national Authority
On regional prerogative intrudes;
Now railway signs with letters one foot high,
By wayside halts in rural solitudes
To secret railway stations will deny
Essential privacy.
Now, local feeling ruthlessly ignored,
Indifferent to regional desires,
State signboards will invade the slumbering shires—
Mute sacrifices to the Tourist Board.

For not by chance, of old, but by design,
The station staffs all telltale signs would screen,
Obliterated on the signal-box,
Erased on platform benches, and unseen
Behind the rustic porter's hollyhocks
And station-master's vine.
And, as incoming trains puffed round the curve,
The personnel would beat a shy retreat,
Or passengers' unwelcome queries meet.
With resolute and regional reserve.

Who has not, as the engine slackened speed,
And villages slowed down beside the track,
Asked if his destination might be near,
And clawed in haste his luggage from the rack,
And waited for a signboard to appear
The naked eye might read,
And wildly scanned again and yet again,
The blindly unresponsive station wall,
And seen no signs, excepting "Booking Hall,"
"Refreshments," "Waiting-Room" and
"Gentlemen"?

Who has not struggled with the window-strap,
The breath-blurred glass
wedged in the well-warped frame,
And wrenched it open with a final jerk,
And craned far out to learn the station's name,
Invisible in circumambient murk
Or with despairing rap
(Drowned in the champing locomotive's roar),
Signalled elusive railway employees,
And strained to catch
the passing porter's wheeze,
And been borne off no wiser than before?

While, like the Bedouin wrapped in his burnous,
Who from the Libyan local bus descends,
And, homing to his dark suburban tents,
Surefooted over trackless desert wends—
The regional, returning residents
Through immemorial use,
Instinctively, by hidden landmarks go,
Leaving the stranded traveller in the train,
To look, and ask, and peer and pry in vain,
To wring his hands, and wonder how they know.

Now all is to be changed. A long farewell
To ancient geographic reticence!
State signs the name of every halt will shriek,
Set high above the creepered railway fence.
No more need passengers play hide and seek
With station personnel.
Their whereabouts conspicuously displayed,
Their secrecy no more inviolate,
The seasonal invasion they await—
Mute sacrifices to the tourist trade.

SAGITTARIUS

DONA NOBIS PACEM

THE church was packed. It was big and bright with whitewash, and everything looked new and bright. The altar was blue and white and thick with waxy lilies, and there were images crowned with immense gold halos, fanned out in spokes like gold peacocks' tails. A priest occupied the high pulpit, high and central above the shuffling throng, a black-haired, saturnine man in the white cotta, and his voice and gestures were sharp, separate, and emphatic. "And since we are Catholics . . . the Church for us is . . . not just a Church . . . it is the thing of our lives . . . of the whole of our lives." Then he was busy about the altar. A choir sang in hard, high voices. A thurible was swung by a tiny boy cased in a scarlet soutane, and the bell began its sharp ringing. The congregation became more quiet. At last the priest turned towards them, and said the prayer *Agnus Dei* three times, while all stayed kneeling . . . *qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem*.

This was High Mass on the Feast of St. Joseph, in the country town of Morata de Tajuña, twenty-two miles south of Madrid. The pious crowd, eight or nine hundred strong, drifts out into the strong sun, and away towards home and field. Old crones, shapeless in fusty black, don't stop to look at the notice pinned to the Church door, which reminds them not to "disgrace the Church by immodest dress," specifying short sleeves and unstockinged legs. Nor at the white stone cross, which commemorates those who died here "*por Dios y por España*." I look at them. For twelve years ago, when I last saw this church, there were no congregation, no Mass, no sacred images. It was scrawled with the hammer and sickle, with the initials and slogans of Republican parties and unions, and stored with ammunition and provisions for the Republican Army, including the XVth Brigade of the International Brigades. Morata de Tajuña was the immediate base for the Battle of the Jarama; it was one of the sharpest battles of the Spanish War, and the first in which an English battalion took part.

A group of men standing outside a wine-bar stared, but didn't move or speak. There were stares from bare-footed, donkey-whacking boys, from girls carrying stone water-jars, and from behind windows of wrought-iron and lace. It seemed plain, no stranger ever came here. I walked up a rough road towards the bitten-off edge of the town, and tried to remember which ridge was which, where the Madrid-Valencia road ran, and which way the Jarama River was. The old women stared, sitting on miniature chairs at the mouths of cave-hovels burrowed into the hillsides. The sun was already hot, and the walls were white like snow, slashed with black shadow, and there was a cruel glare. Two peasants up on the hill were friendly, but became suddenly blank when asked about places and directions. They seemed to hide themselves behind a defensive misunderstanding.

At an inn, lunch was served by a fairly young woman in black. I was her only customer, and she stayed all the time by the table, with hands folded, and seemed to want to talk, but to have lost the power or the habit. "What did you think of our Church?" she at last said. And told, with a momentary dry flicker of animation, about the repairing and re-decorating of it. It had been much damaged "*en el periodo de los Rojos*." She said this phrase flatly, without trace of feeling, disapproval or otherwise.

"The war was here?"

"Yes, the front was here, for three months—for three years—*hasta la Liberación*." Again, absolute detachment of feeling from the word

"*Liberación*," which came out as dry as dried fish.

"The front was in Morata?"

"*Cerca*. Near. Neither the one nor the other could advance, *y se stacionáron*. They stagnated."

It was impressive, how this woman flapped the words with no more feeling than she'd have flapped cockroaches; words which stood for things which had cracked even the flint crust of Spanish life—and here particularly—and not so long ago that all scars would have healed. We were like two poker-players, giving nothing away.

The sun went higher, drenching the white square, burning shadows back into walls. Morata is a beautiful place, marvellous in its Spanish purity, wedged in the apex of the valley like rich white fungus. One began to relax and to forget about asking questions, and to be carried on the back of Spanish life, like a mule's load. The place and its people, so stubborn and stiff and impregnable, imposed this. The men were gathered in the tavern (*Vinos y Licóres*), cool behind white columns, cool with water running through an aluminium sink, dripping perpetually over wine-glasses. Round the walls, bright crude posters of films and bull-fights. Not much talk at first, but a steady, brooding impassivity, with a perceptibly natural pulse—the pulse of a self-maintained community, where all are small-holders, not labourers of a great landlord. The stares did not seem inquisitive, nor prompted by curiosity about a further world. And you could stare too, not staring too long at one man with a monstrous and terrifying goitre, which made a gross pillow for his head; nor at the very sad-faced, thin-mouthed man, with sad, remote eyes which never moved.

Talk began, and flowed about the sides of an immense and jolly peasant, a village Falstaff, supported on a briar stick. The talk was jolly and hard—local stuff, never glancing towards war or politics or history. Anecdotes about donkey-carts clashing with lorries, thrown back and forth in response to the presto tempo of the fat man. Wry mouths cracked open to speak, to drink, to smoke, to swallow slivers of salt fish speared on tooth-picks. Snatches of flamenco-like notes came from somewhere within. And how could one believe, after this timeless hour, that Morata had ever been a powder-box of international emotions, or had ever known clashes more brutal than those of a donkey-cart and a van?

I walked out along the Madrid road, and soon turned half-right, up towards the ridges. Space, silence, afternoon: no smell or movement or sound, almost no colour. The road climbed, and there was a bit which I seemed to remember, where it twisted up to the left, with a steep bank on the far side. I remembered shrapnel bursting just there, when it was jammed with troops and transport, and men raced behind the bank for cover. The need to find out became strong again, and I walked quickly to overtake a peasant's cart. The man stopped, and I was hoisted astride a plank, without a word being said.

The cart was a skeleton in wood, with two huge wheels, drawn by two mules and a donkey in single file. The man set off again, still silent, and there was no noise except the cruel scraping of the wheels' iron rims over sharp stones. We went a long way, ridge following ridge towards a crest which continually receded. At last I saw, in the left flank of the road, a three-sided bite, three sides of a square, cut very deep. A moment later, and we had topped the last swell of ground, and commanded a magnificent view over the valley of the Jarama and beyond, to the broken snowy tips of the Guadarramas—the view which the Republican troops never saw.

The man braked his cart. Exchanging cigarettes, I asked about the bite in the road. "For the lorries to turn round," he said. I looked curious.

"During the war. *Guerra. Aqui guerra mucho.* The Reds and the Whites were less than a kilometre from each other. Many plants were destroyed, and have been planted anew."

This man was more or less young, with a thin, wry face, eaten by sun and wind. Staccato and friendly, and impenetrable. Neither face nor voice gave any clue to his feelings. Nor would have done, I felt, had one stood talking the rest of the day. And where did the road go beyond the crest, by what towns or rivers? "*En el campo!*" he said with a large gesture.

"*En el campo.*" Leaving him and the road, and walking back among olives, I began to find other relics—shelters and dug-outs; in a hollow a sudden crosswise road, known to the English battalion as the "sunken road," against which they had crouched one night of the battle. Farther back, on the Morata side of a bare, bulging ridge, I found what I knew had been the English trenches, with the oblique view down towards Morata, which the soldiers had seen for more than three months; the other way, facing the seemingly endless prospect of higher ground, which concealed Franco's troops. The trenches zigzagged along the ridge, bits had crumbled and collapsed, they were strewn with pinkish stones, but they were still between four and five feet deep. There they had stayed for twelve years, neither tended nor obliterated.

It was the end of the day. Down in the square of Morata, caramels and almonds were being sold on trestle-tables, and there were baby black pigs on a cart, brought grunting to market. People were hanging about, sometimes buying single caramels, and groups of youths burst into rowdiness. I went and sat in the inn. The Señora smiled, and sent a little boy to fetch something, and he presently came back, carrying an illustrated booklet about the Escorial, and we all looked at the pictures of the Bourbon tombs, at Philip II's grim stone throne, and the austere cell in which he died. On one page there was the spectacled face of Padre Mariano Revilla y Rico, formerly Prior of the Escorial, who had died "for God and for Spain." And at the end of the book some threatening admonitions, that now you had seen these wonders, you must remember that the Catholic Church was "*your* business and *your* duty." The Señora closed the book. "*Es una maravilla!*" she said, with half-convinced reverence. I went out. In a fruit-shop an old woman in black, nodding behind oranges and bananas, asked had I liked Morata.

"It is a pleasant place," she said sweetly, "And life has always been very pretty and graceful here."

With such words these people kept their secret. And I was left to think about it, as the bus rattled away through the darkening valley. Nowhere in Spain is typical of anywhere else, and I visited other places and met other people. But it can be said of this experience in Morata that it had been interesting, twelve years after the battle, to come upon this defensive blankness. To feel it hard all over, like the back of a turtle; making possible, in its shelter, a contraction of hope and wish and feeling. They had found here, one felt, a contracted formula to live by, which they placed defensively, not quite knowing that they did so, in front of the threats of probing questions. Knock them or starve them, police them or kill them, these Spaniards would retain taste and sense and individual flavour, like old dried figs; and would still be alive and dangerous, like the deadly spores of botulism, which resist the greatest heat and the greatest cold. *Dona Nobis Pacem!* Sardonic in this place of war between brothers, the shield of the Catholic prayer would suffice them, just so long as they needed or could not avoid that it should. Hearing it, amid the parade of ragged piety, the sprinklings and scrapings of black old crones, you understand that it is not a question of the success of Franco, but of his continuance. That he too has shewn the same spore-like resistance, the same self-contractive ability—merely to be there, and do the absolute minimum—to present the smallest surface to his enemies, like those insects which contract themselves into hard balls when prodded.

This is the speck of character in Spain which outlasts its droughts and wars. Which you can't help admiring, whether in the village priest as he walks undefended, with suavely nodding biretta, amongst parishioners of proved blood-thirstiness, or in Franco himself, who seven weeks ago, on the "Day of Liberation," drove through Madrid in an open Hispano-Suiza through a crowd of nearly a million, not one of whom clapped or cheered. For which Hitler too felt an exasperated admiration. For when Mussolini suggested to him that he might try visiting Franco once again, to get him into the war, Hitler remembering his first visit, replied that he "would rather have three teeth pulled out!"

GILES ROMILLY

(*To be continued*)

SO THEY SAY . . .

On Monday, May 9, the *Daily Mail* published a fulminating editorial attack on Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Attorney-General, over a speech he made at the Oxford University Labour Club:

> Nobody can say that Sir Hartley Shawcross is a public clown . . . but Shawcross the legal animal differs from Shawcross the political animal . . . During the week-end . . . he made another silly attack upon the British Press. This is a favourite fatuity of Sir Hartley's . . . The man does not know what he is talking about . . . What is he trying to do—prejudice the verdict [of the Press Commission's Report]? The public may well ask what possessed Sir Hartley Shawcross to launch this latest ignorant attack against the Press . . .

True, the public *may* ask. But they won't get an answer from the *Daily Mail*: for it did not report Sir Hartley's speech. Here are extracts as reported elsewhere:

Sunday Times, May 8:—

> An essential accompaniment of a free Parliament is a free press and broadcasting system . . . Newspapers ought not to be, nor are they here, fettered either by Government control or by unduly strict libel laws, from giving expression to criticism. Democracy thrives on criticism. And whether the criticism . . . represents a serious public view or merely the opinion, however unfair, of some newspaper owner, it is far better to have that than, as in some countries, none at all. I used to fear that there was grave danger of newspaper misrepresentation. I confess I don't now . .

Oxford Mail, May 9:—

> Having seen the newspapers on the Continent and in the United States, taking it by and large, I think we have a pretty good Press in this country . . .

Perhaps the best comment upon this affair is to be found in the very same *Daily Mail* editorial:—

> We say that were it not for the Press there would be no tribunal of public opinion.

Ministers and M.P.s depend upon the newspapers to report their statements, speeches, and debates . . .

Berlin Time, May 12

Daily Express : Berlin was freed from blockade at 1.35 a.m. this morning when a British-American convoy roared into the city.

Daily Telegraph : First cars reached the capital at 1.40 a.m.

Daily Herald : First car from [the West] checked in at 1.45.

Daily Mail : First cars get through at 2 a.m.

Cadbury's Assortment

News Chronicle, May 14 :—

Page 1 : In thousands of shops today there will be no sweets—no chocolates, no toffee, no acid drops ; just empty jars. And the grown-ups are to blame. There is no doubt about it.

Page 2 : Call a dog a bad name and you will hang it . . . If there is a sweet shortage, the adults will get the blame. This seems hard luck. Grown-ups . . . are not alone to blame . . .

Stanleyana

The People, May 15 :—

I did not even tell my wife my plans. I said I was going for a Turkish bath. Instead, I got into the uniform of a British Brigadier and set off. Nobody recognised me. I was even saluted by soldiers. That was difficult. I had never been a soldier and did not know how to return their salutes . . .

The Observer, May 15 :—

I have a war record that would do credit to any Englishman.

AUTOLYCUS

THE BATAKA OF BUGANDA

UGANDA has been having its share of riot and trouble this month. A call to a general strike, accompanied by a petition to the king of Buganda for electoral reform and economic concessions, followed by arson and fighting, all sponsored by the widespread Bataka Party, only ended ten days later after troops were brought in from Kenya, the Bataka proscribed, its leaders arrested, and a Commission appointed to investigate the whole affair. That is roughly all the British public has been told. Mr. Creech Jones has arbitrarily declined to give Parliament further information pending the Commission's report; newspaper readers are left guessing what really happened and why, and who and what the Bataka are.

My first introduction to them was the sight of a crowd vigorously booing a man down the main street of Kampala last year. It was not, however, the mark of hostility a startled European like myself supposed. It was the rallying cry, the slogan, of the Bataka. It stood for the first syllable in Buganda, and Buganda is a different kettle of fish from the other Uganda provinces. Already organised and powerful when we took it over in 1900, with a king and a civil service of nominated county chiefs, the kingdom of Buganda leads the way in this fifty-year-old African Protectorate, landlocked between Kenya and the Belgian Congo, with a higher standard of education, farming and living than anywhere else in East Africa.

Wandering round the seven-hilled outskirts of Kampala, I found it at first impossible to discover what this Bataka Party of Buganda represented. Only gradually one realised that several oddly assorted fellows were snuggling under the same blanket, and that some got out of bed on the Right, and some on the Left. My first enlightenment came when I was invited to a meeting to hear their views. I found myself sitting round a table in a plantain garden with some fifteen or twenty dignified old Africans, wearing the dark jacket and long white robes of old-fashioned respectability. These, I was assured, were the real Bataka, "the Elders of the People" —the title given to hereditary clan leaders, who in former days had enjoyed a now vanished prestige side by side with the civil service administrative chiefs. It is a title now confusingly adopted by the wider political movement with which the "Elders" are associated.

It took only a few moments to see that these Father Williams, with their academic land grievances dating back to the 1900 Agreement between Britain and Buganda, have become politically a façade. What worries the Government is not the old gentlemen in robes, but the young men in trousers and the labourers in shorts, who have made a "front" of a traditional name. The pattern is only too familiar. A school-bred generation confused, crude and half-orientiated—are growing up and demanding their places in the sun. They resent the dominating position of the Indian in commerce and industry—a middle-class halfway between the ruling English and the labouring African, excluding them from advance; they resent the power of the uneducated conservative chiefs nominated both to the local Parliament and the county administration. There is no way for the educated young man to take part in politics, as opposed to administration. The Bataka is the way of making their voices heard.

"We should be only too pleased," said a British official blandly to me last year, "if the Bataka would come out of the wilderness and take their place as a constitutional opposition. After all, since 1945, out of the 89 seats in Parliament, 36 are elective, and only the other 53 nominated." He knew perfectly well that on this issue he was talking rubbish. Nearly all educated Africans have to earn their living as Government servants of one sort or another—there are few other openings for them; and Government servants, including teachers, are automatically barred from taking part in politics. The remaining few work in the towns as clerks, and are perforce unknown to the village voters, who send these elected members to Parliament by a highly indirect system. The elected members so far have been prosperous farmers firmly under the thumb of the nominated county chief who, often as a nominated member of Parliament as well, is a paid official and highly susceptible to Government pressure, as are the four Africans nominated to the Legislative Council.

High prices and labour unrest play no small part in gaining for the Bataka the support of town workers; dislike of controlled cotton prices enlists some of the farmers; and disgruntled chiefs with axes to grind take an occasional hand. Uniting them all is fear for their land, and suspicion of the White man. They have no settler problem, but they look over their shoulders fearfully to Kenya, and resist any measure that brings it nearer. Many of the English in these territories talk openly of a White Dominion stretching across East Africa; plans like that of the East African Commission, and particularly its implementing Paper, No. 210, are hated and distrusted by all Africans as instruments for further encroachments on their land and their rights.

If you walk round Buganda listening, you hear an echo. There isn't a colony in the Empire where the progressing native is not clamorous for advancement, suspicious of Europeans, beginning to organise in work and politics. The Bataka Party still in the Cave of Adullam stage for all discontents, is just one reflection of the nationalist movements that are bound to come in East Africa, as they have come elsewhere. It is pure Colonial parochialism not to recognise the movement as the local species of a universal genus, and seize the chance to be imaginatively ahead in handling it, instead of trailing behind in the old repressive rut.

And it is a hopeless confusion of important issues conveniently to attribute all the ferment to "Communism." Last summer I could find precious little concrete evidence for the Communist bogy which sits behind police chairs and obscures their judgment. It is possible that the Bataka representative in London, who, incidentally, does his cause little good by the extraordinarily vituperative public letters he is in the habit of despatching, may be in touch with Communists. I do not know. But I'm prepared to bet there is about as much genuine Communism or organised Communist activity in Uganda as there was in India when Annie Besant was organising Congress, and the British were trying to deal with the early nationalist agitations of Nehru or Gandhi.

Even a year ago in Uganda it seemed still not too late. Bitterness among the Africans was certainly far less than in Kenya. There were plenty of opportunities for us to take positive and courageous action to meet new demands. A limited number of members in Parliament elected on an educational franchise might have been a way of giving the educated African a voice, pending universal franchise; a bold plan for training personnel for all-African factories sponsored by the State might have gone on a little way to meeting the argument that the hydro-electric scheme at Jinja means "simply more factories for the Whites and Indians, with Black 'trash' for labour."

There are many keen and honest workers among the officials of the Uganda Government, but they can do little of themselves if the Government as a whole will not face the fact that political development has a dynamism of its own that does not wait for our approval, and that subservient is not the only alternative spelling to subversive. The methods that did not work in India, however honest and well-meaning the individual official, will not work in Africa. But this is a lesson which Secretariats have not yet taken to heart.

BERTHA GASTER

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight.

. . . When people assume, as they generally do, that Communism will soon take over China, it seems to me that they assume too much. I doubt if the formal Communist pattern, blue-printed from the Kremlin, can be successfully imposed for long on China. The Chinese have been swallowing and comfortably digesting their conquerors for many an age. To this it may be objected that the victorious Communist armies are not alien invaders but the Chinese themselves. This is true, although an American documentary film I saw lately described these armies as if they had descended from Mars; but Kremlin Communism is not Chinese, and therefore I do not believe that it can last long, without being radically transformed, among those four hundred million. We may, in fact, see a new kind of Communism, no more like Stalinism than Peiping is like Moscow; and I for one will be delighted to welcome it. We are badly in need of variety and experiment in this world. Big capitalism and Communism are both bleachers and relentless ironers-out, taking

the colour and wrinkles and amusing twists out of whole societies. I look to the Chinese, who have never yet failed the poet and the philosopher, to save the East from German pedantry and Slav fanaticism.

So long as I never go there, I shall continue to think of China with enthusiasm and delight. It would probably be fatal for me to go there because I am not a good traveller, and it is a hundred to one that the discomforts of Chinese travelling, the bugs, the smells, the noise, the hard beds, the huge and overwhelming size and strangeness of the place, once I was actually there, would defeat my good will. But at this distance China is almost my favourite country. I treasure most of the Chinese I meet, and have known only two whom I disliked. I feel more at home with them than I do with many Europeans. Their particular blend of humour, poetry, pragmatism, is more or less the same as mine. (How sensible of them to recognise that fat men are superior to thin men!) There is about them a ripeness and a richness that I enjoy and admire. I like their looks, from those of the astonishing girls, at whom I gape as a peasant at a princess, to those of the wise old men, like benevolent wizards out of the *Arabian Nights*. Their food at its best seems to me the highest achievement of man in his kitchen, a poetry of eating. Their arts are entrancing, exquisitely poised between traditional style and representation, between Matisse and Munnings. And so long as I have the sense to keep away, to remain at home, remembering my limitations as a traveller, this country and these people will be among the chief solaces of my darkening years.

These thoughts of China have been prompted by a new book I am reading, *The Long Way Home*, by Tang Sheng, with some charming drawings by Deh Lan, the daughter of my friend S. I. Hsiung, the Chinese playwright. This volume I recommend to your "Family With Book Fragrance," which, Miss Tang tells us, is the old Chinese name for such a cultured family as yours, my lad. It describes a hazardous journey in 1942 from Shanghai to Chungking, made by Tang Sheng, then a student of twenty, with an odd little group of male companions. It seems to me a triumph of the delectable *picaresque*, for which China is perhaps now the richest background. (In the XVI and XVII Centuries, Spain and France offered the best backgrounds; then in the XVIII Century England took over, followed in the XIX Century by Russia and America; and now it is China's turn.) I have, as you know, a strong taste for the *picaresque*, and that is why I once wrote a long novel called *The Good Companions*, which is neither a sentimental orgy (as some people who never read it seem to imagine), nor a shrewd attempt to capture the best-seller market, about which I knew nothing then and know nothing now, but simply an attempt to write a *picaresque* tale, in the old full rambling fashion, in terms of the England of the Nineteen-twenties. It would be fun to have another try, using a more sardonic and less hearty manner, not being so tender and hopeful as I was twenty-one years ago. But one needs a lot of energy for the job—the engine has to travel a long way at a fairly high speed—and preferably a good deal of new ground to cover; and I would certainly do it much better if I were a young Chinese.

There was a debate the other day in the House here about late licences and night clubs, and during this debate the Home Secretary, one of our soberest citizens, said that he had never been to a night club but added "that the fact that he did not want the facility was no reason why he should deny it to another person." For this statement Mr. Ede deserves our warmest applause. There are now vast fields of human activity in which we have no hope of ever hearing such a tolerant and civilised statement. It is a refreshing oasis in the colossal desert of intolerance and bigotry. Curiously enough, I had my first taste of London night life for years only a week or two ago, when two young friends of mine of the Theatre were celebrating a wedding anniversary and asked me to join them and some other players at a well-known night club. The little party itself was not dreary, but it would have been much gayer if it had been held in somebody's flat, for the night club itself, which was half-empty and yawning, gave us no help at all. In fact, its air of defeat began soon to affect our spirits. Modern London, as I discovered long before the war, is not favourable to night life.

I say modern London because in the Nineteenth Century, especially about the middle of the century, the city had an uproarious and notoriously unsavoury night life, with the Haymarket ablaze with gaslights and crammed with riff-raff long after midnight. Even up to 1914, in one of my clubs (but long before I was a member) the late suppers were popular, and actors and journalists and barristers sat over their port and brandy until the small hours. But these late sittings, like the drunken nights-out of the mid-Victorians, were very much a masculine affair, with wives and daughters out of sight and mind. Then, after 1918, when wives and daughters refused to stay at home, night life on the Continental and American pattern, with dancing and cabaret entertainments, was tried out in London. And, in my view, never really succeeded. The atmosphere of London, heavy, sleepy, domestic, was wrong. It was like trying to make champagne out of old ale. At one time I would take out American friends, who would arrive at the supper table ready to sparkle and be gay, and between my own hastily concealed yawns I would notice how soon they began to droop and look glazed. Clear through the clatter of dishes by tired waiters, the vulgar despair of the saxophones and the Congo thudding of the drums, the tedious long innuendoes of those songs at the piano, came the insistent whispering of Old Mother London: "You're sleepy, sleepy, sleepy. Bedtime—bedtime——"

Some of us were wrong, in our optimism, about what would happen in music here after the war. We thought there would be a large new public for symphonic music. But the present situation is disappointing. There is a new public only for certain composers and certain works. So long as the programme is built around Beethoven, Tchaikowsky, the Grieg Piano Concerto and a few other familiar works, large halls can be filled night after night. But as soon as a serious attempt is made to give programmes representative of the best symphonic music in general, with some attention to contemporary work, the attendance falls lamentably, to the despair of orchestral managers, conductors, and players, who are weary of thumping out the same old stuff. The average symphonic concert programme in London to-day is less enterprising than the programmes I remember at the old Bradford Subscription Concerts, forty years ago. It is true that now we have gramophones and the B.B.C. But big symphonic works cannot be adequately recorded or broadcast, if only because the tremendous contrasts in tone can only be heard properly in a concert hall, and then only in one that, unlike the Albert Hall, has the requisite acoustic properties. We have been promised within two years or so two new concert halls for London, and these may enable the permanent orchestras using them to build up audiences capable of enjoying good programmes. But it will take time—and probably much money.

Meanwhile, Beecham and Ernest Newman have been jeering at us for being less musical than ever and for depending upon public funds to subsidise our music. But why shouldn't we? What else can we do? We are now taxed so heavily that, apart from spending a few guineas on concert seats, we can no longer afford to be responsible patrons of music. I do not like the system myself. I believe people ought to be allowed to devote a certain proportion of their taxed money to clearly defined cultural objects, if only to prevent this country from being given up entirely to greyhound tracks, football pools, cinemas and dance halls. But with taxation at its present height, and with the scantiest relief for any patronage of the arts, I do not see why we should be sneered at for demanding the use of a little public money to keep music going. Art has to have some sort of patron.

Nearly all the accounts I have read of Maeterlinck's life and work have missed the point. They have condescended to him as the author of *The Blue Bird* and the little books about bees and Destiny. But his most valuable work was done in the early Nineties. He made his contribution in those first little plays, which would have an important place in any study of dramatic technique. They created new and exciting drama out of understatement, out of strange silences, out of a bare little world furnished with a few symbolic properties. They were dramas of that Collective Unconscious which Jung was to discover. They could be rather silly, and were always gloriously easy to parody (like Ibsen, Strindberg, Chehov), but they broke completely with the contemporary theatrical tradition and influenced a wide range of later dramatists, from Yeats to Jean-Jacques Bernard. It was the young Maeterlinck who went on a wild, fatal nuptial flight with Melpomene and then fell dead—to write about bees.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The New Statesman" of May, 1924

Witch Hunt

We hope that the Home Secretary will soon find time to begin overhauling the "secret service" division of his Office. A month or two ago he allowed his department to secrete a couple of thoroughly inefficient detectives under the floor at a hole-and-corner meeting of a dozen or so Communist nonentities, with the result that his officers were arrested by the Communists and handed over to the regular police. Now he has allowed another set of incompetents to attend a Communist gathering at Manchester, and to make fools of themselves by arresting a woman delegate under the impression that she was someone else . . . Directly, these little episodes do not do much harm, unless it be harm to give Communists the joy of putting derisive fingers to their noses; but, indirectly, they do a good deal of harm by bringing the machinery of British political justice into ridicule and disrepute.

* * *

Between Pit and Hearth

Mr. Shinwell has extracted from the coal merchants some figures bearing on their costs and profits . . . What the public most want to know is whether the business of distributing coal is being economically handled, or whether large sums which are really sheer waste get entered up as costs . . . The public has got a very strong impression that it is unreasonable to charge 54*s.* 6*d.* for a ton for coal which costs 23*s.* a ton at the pit and 12*s.* a ton for railway transport, including waggon hire.

* * *

Shaw Makes Good

With the passage of mellowing time one may now write seriously and even sentimentally about "G.B.S." without any uncomfortable fear of seeming ridiculous.

The Arts and Entertainment

MR. FRY'S VERSE COMEDY

The Lady's Not for Burning is a comedy written in poetry; and it differs from many worthy attempts in our day to revive "verse drama" by the fact of its poetry being genuine rhetorical (that is theatrical) poetry and its comedy being broadly and humanly comic. It has considerable faults both in its design and in its language. But taken all round, it is the best acted, best produced play running in London at the moment, and to have risked putting on a play that is, on the face of it, so little commercial, with so excellent a cast and with such style (the decor is by Oliver Messel) is a great credit to all responsible.

The general public, faced with the prospect of a comedy in verse, suspect, with some justice as a general rule, that it is going to be embarrassed and bored. I should like to try and persuade them that at *The Lady's Not For Burning* at the Globe they will be neither—if one may judge from the almost continuous ripple of amusement, punctuated by frequent outbursts of laughter, which greeted it on the second night. It is enormously high-spirited, and quite un-precious.

When I saw this play at the Arts last year, I wrote enthusiastically of it here; for I was enormously struck by the profusion, gaiety, invention, wit, and originality of Mr. Christopher Fry's language which seemed to me then to carry the play along on its own breathless impetus. And what I expected from this second visit was to find the first surprise of this poetic shock slightly blunted and the weakness of the fable, which I noted at the time, more obvious.

But it wasn't quite like that. The language is still an almost continuous delight, but the fable, though still a weakness (Mr. Fry has yet to find his North's Plutarch) seems much less vulnerable in this production than it was at the Arts. It stands up well enough. Into the household of a medieval mayor—a bureaucrat with a too highly developed sense of the forms and a heavy cold in the head—come two outsiders, a soldier of fortune who claims to have murdered two people and demands—positively demands—to be hanged for it, and a girl whom the townsfolk have chased into the house in one of their periodic outbursts of witch-hunting. The substance of the comedy is taken up with the problem of what the formalists are to do with these arrant individualists, who proceed to fall in love with one another—until she establishes that she is not a witch, he that he is not a murderer and off they go together. This then is quite an adequate plot for romantic comedy, in which what counts is the individual scenes, and all we require of the whole is that it should be moving from some beginning to an acceptable end.

Many of the scenes are highly successful—all those, in fact, which derive from the purely comic characters. There is Margaret, the mayor's sister and the mother of two horse-playing, lecherous sons. A woman of whom the soldier says:

> Your innocence is on at such a rakish angle
> It gives you quite an air of iniquity.

Miss Nora Nicholson extracts every touch of comedy from this dangerous innocence, which can remark of the crowd that they are "using words That are only fit for the Bible." Then there is the orphan boy acted with a witty dumbness by Mr. Richard Burton: Mr. Harcourt Williams as the rheumy mayor: Mr. Peter Bull's vast commonsensical Justice Tappercoom, who says of himself:

> The advent of a woman cannot be
> Too gradual. I am not a nervous man
> But I like to be predisposed to an order of events.

Or insists, when the soldier of fortune whom they take for the devil announces the day of judgment for this very night:

> Doomsday or not, we must keep our integrity.
> We cannot set up dangerous precedents
> Of speed. We shall sincerely hope, of course,
> That Doomsday will refrain from precipitous action;
> But the way we have gone must be the way we arrive.

The Chaplain is charmingly vacant to the point of simpleness:

> I know I am not
> A practical person: legal matters and so forth
> Are Greek to me, except, of course,
> That I understand Greek. And what may seem nonsensical
> To men of affairs like yourself might not seem so
> To me, since everything astonishes me,
> Myself most of all. When I think of myself
> I can scarcely believe my sense. But there it is,
> All my friends tell me I actually exist.
> And by an act of faith I have come to believe them.

I could quote lines that might strike *the reader* as more immediately funny than these, but it is Mr. Fry's strength as a dramatic poet to know what will strike *the spectator* as funny in the theatre, and I defy anyone not to laugh out loud at the fun Mr. Eliot Makeham gets out of this passage. Indeed one begins to wish as the evening goes on that Mr. Fry would trust this particular gift of his more, and for longer stretches. For the profusion of his language is, finally, intolerably cluttered; it wears us down; it is gelatinous: we cannot get the teeth of our attention through one mouthful and get it out of the way, before the next is shovelled up to us. Let me give one example, taken from one of the best duologues between the soldier, Thomas and the girl, Jennet.

> THOMAS: And, Richard
> Make this woman understand that I
> Am a figure of vice and crime—
>
> JENNET: —Guilty of
>
> THOMAS: Guilty—
> of mankind. I have perpetrated human nature.
> My father and mother were accessories before the fact,
> But there'll be no accessories after the fact,
> By my virility there won't! Just see me
> As I am, me like a perambulating
> Vegetable, patched with inconsequential
> Hair, looking out of two small jellies for the mean
> Of life, balanced on folding bones, my sex
> No beauty but a blemish to be hidden
> Behind judicious rags, driven and scorched
> By boomerang rages and lunacies. . . .
> Half this grotesque life I spend in a state
> Of slow decomposition, using
> The name of unconsidered God as a pedestal
> On which I stand and bray that I'm best
> Of beasts, until under some patient
> Moon or other I fall to pieces, like
> A cake of dung. Is there a slut would hold
> This in her arms and put her lips against it?
>
> JENNET: Sluts are only human. By a quirk
> Of unastonished nature, your obscene
> Decaying figure of vegetable fun
> Can drag upon a woman's heart, as though
> Heaven were dragging up the roots of hell.

It is at these two characters, the main characters of the play, that Mr. Christopher Fry really stumbles. Towards all the others he directs our attitudes ironically but clearly enough. But to these two we never know exactly how we are meant to respond. And it isn't—unless after two visits and two readings of the play (lately published by the Oxford University Press at 6/-) I have simply failed to see it—that his attitude is so subtle or so novel that we can't come at it. It is that his own attitude towards them is so mixed that they never strike through to us recognisably. It is, in the end, the author's humour that undoes him. I do not refer to the bad jokes scattered among the good—Shakespeare has plenty of bad jokes. Nor do I mean the holy jokes which abound and which smack of some Catholic and Anglo-Catholic University circles. I mean that he can never resist a verbal practical joke. No sooner is the car set for a romantic round, than he lets down the tyre with a bang. Thus these two central characters can never get started. They are continually being tripped up in a sort of intellectual horseplay. And as they never get started, so they never get through to anything. Everything that can be done for them is done. Mr. Gielgud speaks the difficult verse most intelligently as well as most beautifully, he strikes the romantic attitude when he can, and the part brings in the comedy timing which he has now perfected. Miss Pamela Brown glides, sidles, darts and twists with a wonderful grace and flash, and she matches Mr. Gielgud's delivery. Technically it is all dazzling. And if, in the last analysis after being greatly entertained, we are left unsatisfied, that is something to do with the conception, not with the realisation.

T. C. WORSLEY

THE RING

The careers of the various operas produced at Covent Garden have since their initial performances been curiously divergent. *Aida* which began well has gone steadily downhill, and so has almost every opera in the Italian repertory. The same applies to *Peter Grimes*, a work which should be one of the corner-stones of the new Covent Garden, but whose recent performances have been ghosts of those given in 1947. In *Rosenkavalier* particularly and to a lesser degree in the remainder of the German operas the trend has been in the opposite direction. More rehersal time has probably been spent on the Wagner operas in proportion to the number of performances given than on anything else in the repertory, and, as a result, the rather mediocre standards which obtained when Wagner was first revived by the present company have now improved to a most marked degree.

Whether a generation which comes fresh to Wagner can ever recapture the enthusiasm which degenerated into something like a cult before the war, seems highly doubtful. At least, the exclusiveness which applied to the old-fashioned Wagnerite now looks too much out of date for revival, and we may hope that before long the audience, which was to be seen at Wagner performances but at no other opera and never by any chance at a concert or recital, will have disappeared or have mended its ways. In any case, cult or (preferably) no cult, the first *Ring* cycle to be heard in England since 1939 is an event. Maybe the *Ring*, like alcohol is cumulative, and the full effect only to be felt when a large portion has been consumed: certainly the introduction to the cycle is slow. If *Rheingold* is to be looked upon as a vast prelude to one colossal piece, it is thorough in its presentation of the material to be used later, but undramatic in character to the point of tedium. Obviously, nothing that Wagner wrote in his maturity can be summarily dismissed, and here as in all his other stage works there are superb passages. But one asks oneself why the pantomine mixture of ladies on wires, dragons, transformations, ogres, rainbow bridges and the like: why the ambitious and yet naively detailed demand for scenes in heaven and underneath the earth: and why no interval? It is an allegory we know, and the music is the thing that counts: yet even that seems largely explanatory and expository and only geared to the stage in the three later dramas of the cycle. The Covent Garden performance could not transcend these limitations, and the undramatic nature of the work was most apparent. On the other hand, most of the great moments came off: the Rhinemaidens scene for once was memorable to look at as well as to hear; though in contrast the final section, when the gods cross the rainbow bridge of deceit, trickery, lies, theft and murder to the Valhalla their virtues have earned them, was less majestic than it can be made to sound. Where less than justice was done to the drama was in allowing Alberich to be played only as a mean-spirited and cracked-voiced denizen of the underworld. He must dominate this section of the *Ring*, not as hero it is true, but at least as a villian of tragic proportions.

Die Walküre is on another plane both as music and as drama. Inspiration gives way less often to sheer hard work and mouthing of motives. The performance itself was much the same as last year, though improved at almost every point by

slight alterations of production and considerably better singing. Rankl conducts with obvious feeling for the score, and the orchestra seems to have caught some of his enthusiasm even if it has not yet eliminated various imperfections of tone and intonation. It certainly sounds a very different body from the one which played *Rigoletto* and *Traviata* a week or two ago. Growing familiarity with the Wagnerian idiom has brought a corresponding understanding of the style, and the members of the two casts who belong to the resident company are rather more nearly on equal terms with the imported singers than originally. Doris Doree's Sieglinde is greatly improved, and she has never sung as well at Covent Garden as she did in the love music in the first act. Here was the broad style and warmth of voice that the music so urgently demands. Edith Coates as Fricka in both operas is also now on terms with the music, if not yet with the German language. Svanholm's bright, hard voice and agility on the stage suited Loge well, and this year his Siegmund was a rather more poetic character than when he sang here before. Hotter's physical presence and broad gestures are of immense advantage to his Wotan: so are the commanding and often noble sounds he makes, though nothing he does can wholly cover up the want of a firm line in his singing. Advantages of style and voice most of the singers in *Walküre* and some of those in *Rheingold* undoubtedly possessed, but no one reduced the sheer difficulty of the music to such small proportions as Kirsten Flagstad, whose Brünnhilde is as dominating as her Isolde. Her timing as an actress and security as a singer support the most radiant Wagnerian voice of her generation. It says a good deal for the general level of the cast, and for her ability to work with a performance rather than against it, that so commanding a singer should not have upset the balance of this opera, as the character she embodies is later to upset the balance between Gods and Fate.

GEORGE LASCELLES

RADIO NOTES

It's been a rather bitty week, offset only by Mr. Henry Reed's powerful and precise study of Leopardi in childhood—*The Unblest*. I hope to have the chance of hearing it again before commenting further. A week otherwise chiefly memorable for music. Sir Adrian Boult's tour with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra opened last Tuesday in Nottingham—not too well, I thought. "We've come from London, and bring to Nottingham this musical tribute to the greatest city in the world." "This" was Ireland's London Overture: Munnings music. There followed a lumpy performance of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony. Both conductor and orchestra seemed stiff in the joints, and the result, simultaneously laboured and perfunctory, made one almost ashamed of the enthusiastic applause. The Brahms Fourth Symphony from Truro Cathedral was very much better. And on Sunday we heard from the Royal Cinema, Plymouth, a really first rate performance of that splendid bullying Symphony No. 2 of Borodin. This concert contained also Holst's *Fugal Concerto* for flute, oboe and strings, which was commented upon in a witty and touching talk about her father by Miss Imogen Holst, in which she spoke of his "unhappy months of success" following the unexpected popularity of *The Planets*. It is to such "bits" that my mind returns this week. To Harold Nicolson protesting against "people who say that a great artist like Picasso is making fun of the public." To Marius Goring, reading (very well indeed) Shelley's long unfinished *The Triumph of Life*. To Malcolm Muggeridge, arguing that "nostalgia is the most effective emotion in radio." Hearing Mr. Boyd Neel's evocation of the musical events of 1924—the year of *Pacific 231*, of *Rhapsody in Blue*, of *Les Biches*, and of the Seventh Symphony of Sibelius—I felt inclined to agree with Mr. Muggeridge. But later, Mr. St. John Ervine's amusing talk, in the uniformly excellent *Living and Reading* series, made one wonder whether *fun* on the air is not equally potent. Last, my mind goes a little further back to the trenchant voice of Miss Rose Macaulay demanding what are to be the qualities of "the radio story of the future."

"The radio story of the future." Miss Macaulay and two fellow critics, Mr. Martin Armstrong and Mr. P. H. Newby, were called upon to judge the stories submitted for the B.B.C.'s *Story Competition* on their "Broadcasting" merits. And they agreed that the three winning competitors (Isobel MacDonald, Arthur Calder-Marshall, Stefanie Fone) had shown a sound instinct in submitting stories with a large element of dialogue. This is true, no doubt. Yet there seemed to be an implication, in the discussion, that such stories, may come to constitute a new art form, that of the "radio short story." There's been a great deal of talk already about "radio drama," and in the *B.B.C. Quarterly* Mr. Herbert Read, with his penetrating pedantry, goes to the root of the matter, demanding, for radio, a new art and a new type of artist. I feel that there has been, in most of this talk, a confusion, not yet cleared up, which lies in the ambiguity of the word *form*. The form of a novel, in the first place, may be governed by the shape of the published work and the number of pages; these represent one set of limits. Secondly, there's the question of the ordering of the material; another set. When people discuss radio as art-form, they often mean an equivalent of the first of these, but appear to believe that they mean the second. That's to say, they mean conditions of producing and listening, effects of speeds and modulations of voices, suitable time-lengths, and so on. It's obvious that artists working for radio should pay the closest possible attention to this aspect of *form*. But what of the other? Will the fully-engaged creative writer look to radio as his final arbiter in the future sense; will he not always

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look beyond, to the leisure of the reader and the permanence of the page? Whether or not, I feel that radio technique can only profit by clearing up this ambiguity. MARK OGILVIE

THE MOVIES

"Ditte—Child of Man" and "Three Dawns to Sydney," at the Curzon

The illustrated programme to *Ditte—Child of Man* contains a preface by the author, the Danish novelist, Nexö, on whose novel the film has been based. Since this envoi seems to expose very clearly the film's inherent weakness, I shall quote some sentences from it. "The novel *Ditte, Child of Man*, is an account of proletarian woman, in the form her existence took, with very few exceptions, up to the beginning of this century." It has been the fate, then, of proletarian woman, "with very few exceptions," to be the bastard of a peasant mother sent to prison for matricide, to suffer poverty and ostracism, and then at the age of fourteen to be in turn seduced and, with a baby on the way, presumably to begin the cycle over again; such at least is Ditte's story on the screen. "Ditte—child of man—has by her never-failing care, her sufferings for others, merited the name mother of humanity, its *mater dolorosa*. Is it possible not to love her and give her a glory, the halo of a saint, in one's heart?" When the author himself so urgently requires it—yes, quite possible. That he thinks very kindly of his own creation is emphasised by his concluding paragraph. "To her—the mother of pain but of imperishable confidence, too—I want to put up a memorial by my book! And I have had the pleasure of finding that the film also beautifully achieves this end."

So it may; but that there is something meretricious about this beauty most readers of the sentences quoted above would probably already have decided. No really good novel, one feels, could be written about in such terms, and the film obviously gives a faithful reflection of the novel. Its inherent contradiction—that of making life rather uglier than it is in order to display the fact far too beautifully—can make for endless falsities. The film at the Curzon is always beautiful to look at and the chief parts—especially that of Ditte as a child and as a growing girl—are beautifully acted; but only rarely does the spectator come out of an uncomfortable hush as though unwillingly he was to find himself detained by a church service. The status of these peasants seems to me all wrong—palpably limelit and high-flown in utterance; nor is that so surprising since they represent generations of suffering. What *is* surprising is that, despite this duplicity, so many of the scenes should come off and that Ditte herself should be an appealing individual. Jette Kehlet as the little Ditte and Tove Maes as the older one equally capture our sympathies, though that "halo" of which the author has spoken gets in the way at times. However, this Danish film, sensitively directed by Bjarne Henning-Jensen, comes near to being a very good one, so long as you can put up with loaded dice and sententious looks.

In the same programme *Three Dawns to Sydney* takes us from London to Sydney in just under an hour. While the travellers by B.O.A.C. sit in an almost windowless corridor enjoying the furnishings we are shown scenes from some of the places over which they float: Sicily, Transjordan, Karachi, Singapore and the Australian outposts. Very delightful, too, these scenes are, especially the glimpses of Sicily in winter-time, with cactus and goats, bagpipes, a village Christmas, and the snows of Etna in the distance. Each local scene has its touch of story, a festival, a meeting between camels and armoured cars in the desert, a child-birth, and so on. Mr. John Eldridge both wrote the script and directed the film, which makes a more than agreeable use of its utilities. But one can never get away from or feel much curiosity about the silvery plane in the skies. Once that snout has loomed in the dawn and that whizzing wheel has been safely retracted we lose interest; nothing can happen; there is no connection between the earthy little dramas and the convenience of air travel. The only thing that could bring them together would be a crash, and that, since the co-operation of B.O.A.C. has been involved, is presumably ruled out from the start.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

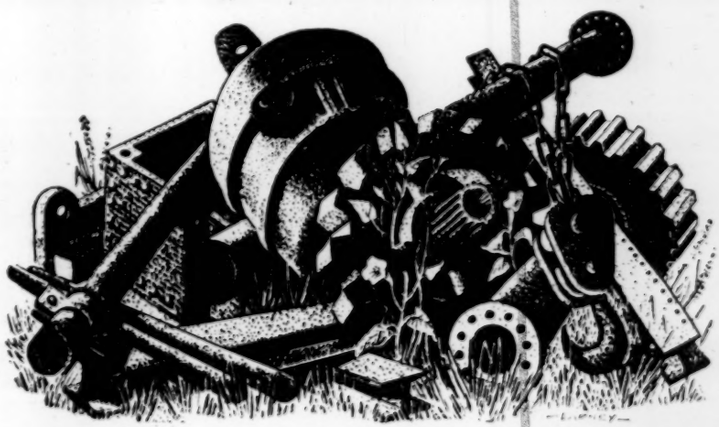
At the London Gallery a small collection of the earlier Chiricos may not excite enthusiasm; yet one can acknowledge the homogenity of subject and treatment in pictures which presented threeply piazzas and cardboard arcades of surrealist quality. The awkward perspectives, the dark depressing colours had imaginative vividness so long as the whole work was suffused by the poetic conviction of his curious dream-world. While the surrealist idea permeated the whole creation we could ignore the tentative, pedestrian drawing and the stiff unsure handling of paint.

However, Chirico's muse has departed and he has undergone a much publicised "conversion" from a "modern" to a "traditional" practice. The fruits of this event are to be seen in one hundred paintings (executed during the last ten years) and now on view at the R.B.A. Galleries in Suffolk Street. All that can be said is that an indifferent "modern" has turned into a bad contemporary artist. His endless squiggly touches of white lamb's wool and the lumpy, abruptly placed forms, are still there. But instead of the mild poetry and wit of that familiar sea-shore where the white horse and the brown paw the air beside chunks of a broken column, we now have self-portraits of the artist wearing armour, ostrich plumes waving in his hat! In other words it is a vulgar and incompetent pastiche of Rubens (and even Renoir in one hideously insensitive reclining nude). No "reversion to tradition" could be less genuine than this playing about with properties from the past. Its falsity is not even offset by great skill of any kind—a thing we find just occasionally in academic painting.

At Gimpel Fils thirty-two paintings, a few drawings and an Aubusson Tapestry introduce André Marchand, one of the better known French painters of the generation which is struggling to survive in the wake of Picasso, Braque and Matisse. Marchand has two styles at present. One is complex and flat; the other has greater clarity and depth of design and is altogether the more forceful. Examples of the first are number 20, *Le Panier d'Oranges*, or 32, *Le Plaine en Automne*.

An example of the second one, *Astarté* in her Picasso straw hat, sitting orange-rimmed against the huge flatness of a green-black Mediterranean, which in turn has a horizon consisting of a scarlet-vermilion line sandwiched next to—I think—a viridian-green one is excellently three-dimensional. Here the huge, ragged facets of the design evoke the various objects in the mythical scene with a huge sense of seashore space. And it is colour that does the trick.

Against this outburst of French vitality we may measure the latest works from two of our own none too timid practitioners: Colquhoun and MacBryde are again at the Lefevre, along with Winifred Nicholson. Colquhoun shows only monotypes and drawings; MacBryde nothing but oils. Colquhoun's are all of people; MacBryde's are all still lifes—or ought to be: the five figures to be found here and there in his pictures are all intruders: to gain entrance at all they have had to be recast in the likeness of a cucumber or a sliced up melon, or even an oil lamp. He is occupied not with the personality of either objects or persons but with the formal set-up involved in any pictorial expression of these things. In other words his interest is primarily in the architecture of his canvases. This shows in the weighty build up of forms and in the even, all-over emphasis of his design. No corner of his picture is less important than the centre: the rhythms of the sliced melon flow outwards distorting the secondary objects on the table top, as well as the table itself, the floor, the walls and



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the window, into agreement with the melon. A melon-centred theme spreads its formal rings outwards and pervades everything else.

Colquhoun's monotypes have all the expressive texture and handwriting that MacBryde seeks (quite consciously, of course) to eliminate from his oil paintings. And Colquhoun's inventiveness is here greater than ever: no two heads are cast in the same formal mould. In this respect of formal invention Marchand is by comparison eclectic and fashionable. In these monotypes Colquhoun is surely more successful altogether than in his oil paintings: the spontaneity of his inventive hand is naturally and swiftly recorded in the monotype; but in the oils he has to "think up" a complicated system of awkward unwieldy units to communicate a similar vision. His grey, white and black *Fishwife at Table*, number 45, is a magnificent thing, as elegant as Braque and as impersonally heraldic in the streamlined head.

Singing Woman, number 52, and *Head*, number 60 also are superb in their complex simplicity. Too often in the past the formal complexity in Colquhoun was excessive and somehow, we felt, false, unnecessary: but now he arrives (bringing a totally new range of colours) at something enduring at last.

Winifred Nicholson's new paintings merit more space than I have left myself, for they are surely her most successful yet. Until I saw *Christmas Roses*, number 28 (with its background of Great Gable and others?), and number 22, *Ullswater*, I had never discovered the lyrical, rippling silhouettes of the English Lake Mountains recorded in anything but dead, academic terms. This was therefore a minor revelation. *The Christmas Present*, 27, and *White Hyacinths*, 42, are equally charming and excellent. It is true they exploit things that Christopher Wood suggested; but they do so with liveliness and restraint.

PATRICK HERON

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Correspondence

THE DOLLAR DILEMMA

SIR,—I would like to support Miss Warriner's excellent review of the current report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Her plea for the United States to "do a little planning" might well be echoed along the corridors of Congress with good effect. No one would suggest that the British Government should itself participate in this "lobbying": all one might wish is that the Government would pay a little less attention to the American obstructions which are being directed, unceasingly it appears, against broadening our trade with Eastern Europe.

The extraordinary statement made by Mr. Averell Harriman (Ambassador-at-large for the E.C.A.) at the Geneva E.C.E. conference that "the failure of Eastern European countries to export primary products to the West as they did before the war is a principal reason why East-West trade has been lagging" can scarcely be supported by the facts—as presented by the *Survey* itself.

While the Americans urge the Western European group to find its own solution to the economic problems (while knowing this to be impossible in view of the dollar shortage—unless the Americans change their policy) they urge Eastern Europe to increase its exports of basic raw materials (i.e., timber, coal, non-ferrous metals as well as food) to the West without any guarantee of receiving capital machinery in return.

This is exactly what Germany did in the pre-war years. Her policy of using the Eastern European countries as suppliers of primary products at cheap prices (cheap because of the fantastically low wage-rates in Eastern Europe at that time) allowed the Germans to obtain a strong economic grip in those countries. The policy of preventing any indigenous industrialisation played into the hands of monopolists throughout the world—not the least, the Germans themselves.

Eastern Europe requires all the industrial equipment it can get from the West. The various national economic plans all depend on a major advancement in industrialisation. But what are these countries to do? While Mr. Harriman talks speciously about the failure of Eastern European countries to export primary products, the United States refuses to give the E.C.E. secretariat a list of the products whose export to Eastern Europe is banned or restricted by the United States on security grounds. And what capital commodity cannot be placed in that marginal category?

And when Mr. Mayhew, Britain's Foreign Under-Secretary, was challenged on the same point he refused to join battle.

As Miss Warriner asserts—and as the E.C.E. itself has long urged—Western Europe must get down to real trade on a mutual and equal footing if the European economic position is to be improved by the time E.R.P. ends.

In this direction lies the solution, in the end, to the dollar problem. Once Western and Eastern Europe resolve their trading differences and get down to mutual planning the United States could not afford to play the game of an obstructionist. For its own good it would have to advance long-term dollar credits . . . or else face the alternative of long-term slumps, with all their attendant political manifestations.

GEOFFREY G. GOODMAN

HONG KONG

SIR,—To many people who know the Far East, the preparations to defend Hong Kong against the Chinese Communists seem like midsummer madness. For one thing the water supply, as anyone will agree who knows the island, is 100 per cent. vulnerable. We could not hold the place against the Japanese, who were alien invaders; how is it to be held against the Communists, who are after all Chinese, in spite of their alien supporters?

It seems to me that the people of this country ought to be told if there is any good reason for this desperate expedient. Why does one give up Ireland, but cling to Hong Kong? It has long been a thorn in the flesh of nationally-minded Chinese, though their wealthy business men and fugitive politicians have found it a useful sanctuary. Nevertheless, those of us who have conscript sons in the Army do not want them massacred on the waterless hillsides of Kowloon to protect a handful of rich China traders Or even British "business interests."

36 Penywern Road,
London, S.W.5. D. E. SCOTT

THE LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

SIR,—Perhaps the writer of your article on the exclusion of Communists from the John Lewis Partnership will explain why that is so much more devilish or more dangerous than the exclusion from employment in most industries of anarchists and others who cannot bring themselves to join trade unions? Credit should be given where credit is due—the state of mind behind the purge is not that of the believer in the "open shop" but that of the T.U.C. and all those who have fought so hard and so long for the repulsive principle of the "closed shop."

ANTHONY WEST

[Critic refers to this letter in the London Diary.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LOCAL ELECTIONS

SIR,—Critic is very fortunate in his village if the workers are not only dissatisfied with the old order of local government but have the courage to try to change it. I wish this were so throughout the rural areas. From my experience as a Labour Candidate in the Essex County Council and Rural District Council Elections, the working classes are as horrified as the gentry at the "introduction of politics" into local elections. I am considered an interfering busybody and accused on all sides of splitting the village in half because I have challenged the old order.

Why do so many working people vote Tory? It is true that in some cases there is definite intimidation by the landlord and/or employer, and the worker has no alternative, but on the whole I feel it is the instinct of survival of the fittest at work. The cottage folk, sub-consciously remembering the centuries of hunger and want behind them, think that by voting Tory they will identify themselves with the security of the gentry, with their lovely houses, smart clothes, new cars and beautiful accents.

DOROTHY CROKER

Timperleys Farm, Great Henny,
Nr. Sudbury.

WORLD PEACE CONGRESS

SIR,—Thanks to some fair-minded lawyer friends from beyond the Curtain who wanted the West to be represented, I took a very minor part in the World Peace Congress. Mr. Zilliacus was given two hours; I had five minutes. But here are my impressions.

I agree with Mr. Zilliacus that there was ample evidence of a widespread desire for peace. If the atmosphere of the platform was chilly with too much calculated partisanship, the atmosphere of the audience was fine, inspiring, eager, enthusiastic. Here were men and women who had suffered bitterly, and who had learnt everything about Fascism except that its methods must never be imitated by decent men. The Italian "Peace Train" brought some 1,000 visa-free human sardines to share the Italian seats; the Russian speeches were outstanding with a noble self-confidence that shamed the bitter propaganda of others; and there was a cameraderie between East and West and Colonial in which national and racial differences were superbly irrelevant.

The Western representation on the platform was inadequate and untypical. In the audience there were dozens of delegates who had good ideas about peace, but no chance to express them publicly. And the set speeches were much too long, except perhaps for the Slavs who showed a listening fortitude like that of Highland Presbyterians.

The Congress, unhappily, despite the manifesto and the President's speech, did not speak much of compromise and the primacy of common interests over ideological differences. When John Rogge said it he met with disapproval. Partisans tend to be bellicose. The Atom bomb in American hands was

a moral abomination; in Russian hands—ah, that might be different!

I did not find much consolation in the clerics, any more than I did at Amsterdam last year. Court chaplains to King Demos or King Mammon lack the Savonarola touch. But they represent an element of great potential power and detachment; and I fell for the Russian Orthodox Bishop with his concise and moving oratory, his beard, and his butter-cooler muslin hat.

As to the future, I feel that Mr. Zilliacus' suggestion that "non-Communist progressives should be less fearful and suspicious" is unjust. Where is the evidence that tiger-riding is less dangerous than it was in Riga? If anything broad is to be built on this Congress, it must be made plain that non-Communist progressives are really wanted to be more than stooges for a political ideology. Their speeches must be welcomed and fairly reported—"giving freedom and enjoying freedom" as Edward Benes said in his last message to Czechoslovakia. My speech was recorded in *Humanité-Dimanche* as "Mr. H. M. expressed sentiments that did not meet with the approval of the meeting."

If true lovers of peace are to work together they *all* must show less suspicion and more tolerance, a real concern for civil liberties everywhere, a real desire to create supranational institutions and make them work, and a real hatred of war at all times and places. Is it too late to build a great Peace Movement that will, without bitterness, secure that peace, founded on knowledge and not secrecy, integrity and not hypocrisy, goodwill and not scheming, for which all men long? The 1899 and 1907 Hague Conference was due to reassemble in 1915; what about 1951?

W. HARVEY MOORE

GASWORK SOCIALISM

SIR,—Your Correspondent in his article "Gaswork Socialism" shows a complete misunderstanding of the significance of Co-partnership as it has been practised in the Gas Industry.

Putting on one side the contemptuous opening reference to "much vaunted labour co-partnership schemes," I join issue with his assertion that "there has been little opportunity in the past for workers to share in the management," and that "in general these schemes have been little more than bonus schemes." In fact, so far at least as the larger part of the Gas Industry's schemes are concerned, the emphasis has been exactly reversed. Through the Co-partnership Committees (and in some cases the Employee Directors) the spirit and driving power of Co-partnership have sprung from its recognition of an identity of interest between employees and employers. This identity of interest has involved much more than the mere sharing of profits. It has depended—not only in theory but in actual practice—upon an active spirit of mutual understanding and confidence, fostered by the employees' own elected Representatives in continuous consultation with a humane and sympathetic management. When the profits were not there—as was the case during and after two World Wars—Co-partnership, far from weakening, developed in strength of purpose and will.

Your Correspondent invalidates his own claim that the main appeal of Co-partnership rests in its bonus incentive when he quotes figures to show that this bonus represented for each member "barely £10 a year."

An imputation of insincerity is cast upon the motives of the employers by suggesting that they attempted to make use of the Co-partnership agreement signed by participants to nullify the bargaining powers of the Union. Such an imputation is unfounded. If it is true, as it may well be, that the Union has not found all the opportunities it sought of exercising its powers of collective bargaining within the Industry, it is due to the fact that the conditions of employment already existing under Co-partnership made such bargaining unnecessary. To impute sinister motives to the employers is untrue and unjust.

What Co-partners think is shown by the result of a recent ballot held in the largest Gas undertaking in the country, when 61.5 per cent of the votes cast, were in favour of a continuance of Co-partnership. Even the Government has realised the strength of this feeling by permitting Co-partnership schemes to continue till March 31st, 1951.

HARRY GILPIN, *Chairman.*
Industrial Co-partnership Association,
36, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

GERHART EISLER

SIR,—The British Council for German Democracy, an organisation founded in 1942 to assist the German anti-Fascists inside and outside of Germany, and to aid them in building a democratic Germany, took the initiative in the defence of Gerhart Eisler.

Mr. Eisler, a German citizen who has been trying to return to his own country since 1945, had no government to which he could turn on his unwilling arrival on British soil. We feel that there will be general satisfaction that he was defended at his first appearance in Court and that his Counsel was able to put the case for the defence at the earliest possible moment. It is intended to take every possible legal step on Mr. Eisler's behalf.

We feel that many organisations and individuals will wish to be associated with this move to ensure justice for a man whose devotion to the common cause of the Allies during the war cannot be disputed. Accordingly, we appeal with confidence for contributions to the fund set up by the undermentioned to cover the expenses of the case. Contributions should be sent to: Eisler Fund, c/o National Council for Civil Liberties, 11a, Kings Road, Sloane Square, S.W.3.

ELIZABETH A. ALLEN
(*Gen. Sec.*, National Council for Civil Liberties)
PAUL ROBESON
(American Civil Rights Congress)
GORDON SCHAFFER
(*Hon. Sec.*, British Council for German Democracy)

HISTORY REPEATS

SIR,—Are the following quotations from a letter from Thomas Paine, dated 9 September, 1788, evidence of how "history repeats itself" or of the continuity of our foreign policy? This letter is one of a series of reports from Paine, in London, to his friend Thomas Jefferson, then U.S. Ambassador in Paris.

> The enmity of this country against Russia is as bitter as it ever was against America, and is carried to every pitch of abuse and vulgarity. What I hear in conversations exceeds what may be seen in the newspapers. They are sour and mortified at every success she acquires, and voraciously believe and rejoice in the most improbable accounts and rumors to the contrary.

The next paragraph begins, "There are those who amuse themselves here in the hope of managing Spain . . .," which introduces another familiar note.

ADRIAN BRUNEL

BORING BULLFIGHTS

SIR,—It is understandable that parts of my book *Granada Window* must be very irritating to a person who holds the views of Mr. Giles Romilly, but it seems a pity when a reviewer allows irritation to lead him into deliberate mis-statement. May I ask for a little of your valuable space, to correct the more gross of his inaccuracies?

Far from holding a brief for all things "Spanish"—courage, child-worship, cookery and the devotion of "Spanish" servants (I set the word "Spanish" into inverted commas—where surely the hideous concoction "Hispanophilia" also belongs?—as I lack Mr. Romilly's temerity in generalization about an area so diverse in its regional characteristics that what applies to one province may be totally false about another, only a few miles away). I give at least two examples of the failure of the first; deplore the second; admit my personal experience of cookery in the home to be, to put it mildly, unfortunate, and go some way to show (in the case of old Josefa) the inconvenience of feudalism in the home.

As my chapters on The Hot Days, The Cold Days, and the Gipsies do not fit in with his picture of me as a hysterical, non-moral, vulgar, old maid, drunk on Iberian air, Mr. Romilly naturally omits them—preferring to concentrate on my "rank and sensuous" description of the Alhambra, which, including a word of warning to travellers, to expect disillusionment, occupies a single page, before developing into two ghost stories and a humorous vignette of two old ladies.

I confess to finding somewhat obscure his annoyance with me for knowing a little about the bulls, and his suggestion that my chapter on them would be improved by some insincere literary moralizing on bullfighting (proved insincere by the fact of my attendance at the fights), for the sake of British prestige, curious, to say the least. I deplore the removal of the phrase "Bull fighters are so boring" from its context, in such a way as to offer an affront to some Spanish gentlemen whom I hold in the highest esteem. If, by the way, Mr. Romilly can furnish me with an English equivalent for the technical term *novillada*, I shall be obliged; perhaps he would like at the same time to try his hand on translating *flamenco*.

When, however, I spread my little net for the unwary, in my references to the Granada Reds, I little dreamed of finding Mr. Romilly floundering in it! Poor Mr. Romilly—victim of "the awful hammer of female humour." Might the cure be—just a grain of Andalucian salt?

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE poet, critic, novelist and amateur playwright Charles Williams died four years ago, aged a little under sixty. He had developed late as a writer and failed, I should have thought, to produce a work of quite the first importance in any of the forms he attempted, though everything that he wrote met with critical respect. This is not, however, the view taken by C. S. Lewis, who now refers to Williams as "a great poet" in that almost tacit, parenthetical manner which barely concedes the possibility of a different opinion and who looks forward to the day when Williams scholarship shall have attained such heights that the commentary provided by himself in *Arthurian Torso** is allotted its place "among the pre-scientific primitives." An intelligent foreigner, M. Weidlé, has been persuaded that, Hopkins apart, Williams exerts upon our young poets "the only influence even remotely comparable" with T. S. Eliot's. And, from Mr. Eliot's own hand, one remembers an obituary notice which we may have been inclined to dismiss at the time as evidence of an unsuspectedly warm heart.

Williams's surviving verse is to be found in two volumes of an unfinished lyric cycle on the matter of Britain. There is no suggestion that the poet's ancestry and upbringing were anything but Cockney, though a Welsh surname would prove a psychological aid to anybody wishing to identify himself with the bard Taliessin. I take the view that these poems exhibit a modernising pre-Raphaelitism, technically uneven, wordy and as notably lacking in images as the path to mystical union. There are good lines. By selecting quotations and linking them together with a prose abridgement of the sense, as Mr. Lewis has done, it is not difficult to flatter the work out of all recognition. These poems creditably found a place in the little magazines, so that one tended to think of Williams as a younger man, but I do not see how a manner so eclectic could influence other poets unless it were to read Dante for the wrong reasons or tolerate the worst of Blake. By prolonged incantation, a country of the mind is indeed conjured up, but it resembles, I think, Hampstead, with Tennyson and Morris on the bookshelves.

I do not know to what extent whole-hearted admirers of Charles Williams think that content matters in a poem. Perhaps they are of the opinion that one subject is as good as another and that King Arthur will do perfectly well. Even so, unless it is distance alone which lends enchantment to the view, one might have expected some intellectual curiosity, and in this I find Williams unaccountably deficient. That he was himself a very modest scholar his books on witchcraft and on Dante show. It is difficult to go into the former subject at all deeply without sooner or later coming across the interpretations of Garçon and Vinchon, unflattering as these may be either specifically to theologians or more widely to the human race. *The Figure of Beatrice* likewise pays no attention to the argument that Beatrice symbolised the eucharist and that Dante wrote cryptically to conceal a heresy.

As to the matter of Britain, why, after his main poetic effort had already been made upon it, did Williams revert to the same theme in prose? Professor Vinaver's definitive Malory must at about this time have passed through his hands at the Oxford University Press, but these chapters on "The Figure of Arthur," nowhere glance behind the courtly literature at non-Christian sources or acknowledge the possibility that the son of Uthyr Pendragon was no king but a *condottiere* and that the scene of his desperate feuds lay north of the Tweed. These books are, in fact, not critical, speculative or documentary works at all. They are meditations upon selected texts, designed to serve the purposes of a spiritual and poetic phantasy. Elsewhere, their author displayed a great appetite for ancient lore, the passionate assimilation of which gave all their impetus to his novels.

It may be thought that his capacity for belief was similarly an appetite. In Williams on the one hand, in John Betjeman on the other, the literary succession of Anglo-Catholicism divides and is lost. Mr. Betjeman wildly, wilfully loves what he despises and, in so doing, has uttered the most piercing lyrical cry since A. E. Housman. Williams abandoned the classicist position and took over from Mr. Eliot only what now seems to have been a romantic protest against the prevailing climate of liberal agnosticism, which to us is classical. Williams explicitly urged a "theological romanticism." He denied that this was another name for romantic theology, but it is. In the novels, belief ramifies and proliferates at a rate which would baffle a theosophist. Five of these novels (†) are now in print again. As a publisher, it is probable that Williams knew something about the elements of popular success and here pursued them, but those who wish to measure his mind must also read these books, asking themselves how far the author extended belief to each particular invention and whether the answer can be gratifying to religious faith.

War in Heaven appeared in 1930, *Many Dimensions* (its sequel in the sense of sharing a villain with it) and *Shadows of Ecstasy* the following year. There followed an interval of six years before the quieter, more sensitive *Descent into Hell*, and, with *All Hallows' Eve*, 1945, we return to black magic unrestrained, Williams having, in the meantime, become acquainted with Maimonides and his ectoplasmic manikin, perhaps in a late issue of *The Criterion*. The talisman of *War in Heaven* is the Holy Grail itself, discovered beneath cobwebs in a country church and pursued like a secret agent by native and foreign diabolists. In *Many Dimensions* an infinitely divisible stone from the crown of Solomon is made of primal matter and acquainted, like Mr. Priestley, with the time-theories of Dunne. In *Shadows of Ecstasy*, a European visionary two hundred years old taps the dark soul of Africa, and black armies appear on Hampstead Heath. The Jewish mystagogue of *All Hallow's Eve* seeks hegemony over this world and the next and seems bound to achieve it with the help of a stupid and malicious girl recently killed in an air raid, but is thwarted by the nice nature of her school friend.

The characters in all these novels spend as much time out of the body as in it. To a theosophist, this would be easy. He could suppose them to be on the astral plane (or thereabouts). But, in Christian eschatology, through what pre-purgatorial condition do the souls of Lester and Evelyn wander? The chief virtue of these novels is the consistency and vividness of such hallucinations. When the body is off, the light brightens, the temperature rises, and we feel that the author is at home. To many churchmen the most shocking passage would be one, in *Shadows of Ecstasy*, where orthodoxy is only too literally affirmed. The Anglican archbishop performs a ceremony of exorcism, and it is immediately successful.

What his publishers claim for Charles Williams is "an authentic experience of the supernatural." They also speak of "the conflict between good and evil," that favourite recourse of reviewers faced with, for instance, a new translation of François Mauriac. But may not all this rest upon an impoverished experience of the natural? And the knowledge of good and evil is surely not vouchsafed except to those who have bitten deeply of the apple, though a man of sedentary habit may from his virtuous armchair dream expansively of wickedness and dissolve the world away with abstract nouns. My limited personal contact with Anglo-Catholics suggests to me that what is sensual to most of us is a hairshirt to them, and *vice versa*. Their current devotion to sexual love, parturition and public houses is, I think, ideological. One feels that they are being terribly brave to go in for these things and that they would much rather sit in a cool church and think about suffering. The human situations which even the supernatural event requires for its framework are, in the novels of Charles Williams, tenuous and unliveable, his characters themselves curiously filleted, though many of them appear to be autobiographical figures or portraits of friends, like the Lord Chief Justice in *Many Dimensions*, whose views are those propounded by A. O. Barfield in the best of the *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* published as a memorial volume the year before last, but who, despite his possession of that "fastidious and ironical goodwill which, outside mystical experience, is the finest and noblest capacity man has developed in and against the universe," ejaculates, "O la la!" at moments of crisis. For Williams was a *naïf* as well as a chaotic novelist. From beginning to end, his dialogue betrays the same idiotic facetiousness. His leading characters are uniformly well connected and yet give off the effluvium of offices not in Whitehall. He can resist no temptation to digress, and it seems unlikely that he ever knew which of his chapters were effective and which intolerable.

Descent into Hell, where some degree of literary digression is relevant, might have been a very good book indeed if, in it, the phenomenal world had at first seemed more opaque, if we had been shown in the embittered scholiast human forces tending towards so extreme a degree of self-love, if we had felt that the author knew just what kind of suburban young lady it was whose image became his succubus, if the hanged labourer's existence had included more than a nagging wife and a vague predisposition to misfortune, and if the dramatic poet with the so curative influence in his spiritual relations with nervous girls had not, like all Williams's redeemed characters, too frequently invoked "the Omnipotence," "the Direction," "the Mercy," in a tone of easy but significant banter which must have prevailed during those epic chats in college rooms, and that cider-drinking with holy jokes at (may we suppose?) the Eagle and Child, of which the Sage of Magdalen has told us. Better still if the succubus theme had been placed at the centre and all else subordinated to it. But this is to demand of Williams that he had been a true novelist, and he was not.

In the finest work of the pen, sensuality and asceticism meet, Flaubert in the Levant and Flaubert at Croisset. Williams had both, but they were inverted, as it may be that they always are in religious persons. If they met, it was somewhere outside literature. Williams was a man of conspicuous but undisciplined gifts, a polygraph who cared for a great many things more than he cared for writing well, and who, when he tried to subdue his imagination to a vision of order in the Taliessin poems, found his means insufficient. A passionate scepticism or religious beliefs less centrifugal might equally have focused the apperceptions of a roving intellect and given them concreteness. Either might have resulted from a life geared earlier to a purely literary ambition. Given a tendency to dissipate

* *Arthurian Torso*, by Charles Williams. *Oxford*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

† Published by *Faber*. 8*s*. 6*d*. each.

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oneself, a medium like the theatre, whose demands are clear and inescapable, may sometimes elicit what armchair lucubrations have failed to elicit, but Williams began to approach the theatre only when a habit of writing bad dialogue had already been established in his novels. The plays which exist are little more than charades. The writers most able to benefit from what a theatre can provide tend, moreover, to be side-tracked nowadays into the *little* theatre, which is something quite different, and which, in this country, is at the moment quite specifically disabled from exercising a corrective influence on minds already predisposed to the view that what we need is more nativity plays.

And yet Charles Williams was by no means the least attractive of our late contemporaries. A part-time inhabitant of Goetia, the quality his writing lacks is precisely magic. Dignified by remoteness, a high degree of generalisation and a staccato urgency of semi-colons, the timid humanity and extra-terrestrial yearning of his poems and perhaps *The Figure of Beatrice*, too, may nevertheless continue to move and puzzle another generation of readers, if his friends and co-religionists will but refrain from exposing his memory to the dangerous absurdity of over-estimation.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

A LIFE OF TOLSTOY

Leo Tolstoy. By ERNEST J. SIMMONS. *Lehmann.* 25*s*.

It is almost impossible to write a really bad book about Tolstoy, though a good many people have done their best to do so. In life he had such a gigantic and complicated personality or individuality that he fascinated every one—for instance, two such entirely different people as Chehov and Gorki. The tang and quality of this gigantic person get into everything connected with him, even his casual remarks and the stories people tell about him, and so pervade the biographies and save the banal biographer from himself. They have saved Mr. Simmons, who, but for Tolstoy, would have written a really bad book. Even as it is, Mr. Simmons's style is lamentable; the creaking of his sentences is often as painful as the noise of a slate-pencil on a slate:

> In his brief university career, Tolstoy experienced the deadening impact of stereotyped factual knowledge on a mind searching for ideas, first causes and an understanding of life.
>
> At this time of deep personal discouragement amid the surroundings of war, Tolstoy was suddenly illuminated by the spiritual incandescence that would brighten the road of the last thirty years of his life. But this seed of a new religion had been planted in him very early.
>
> Conjugal epistolary commonplaces were now rarely brightened by the humour and verbal playfulness of his letters to her shortly after their marriage.

How, one wonders, can anyone who has read Tolstoy write about Tolstoy like that!

The book has other serious defects. Mr. Simmons appears to have made use of a "vast amount" of unpublished material and of material recently published in Russia, but unavailable to the English reader. His book is inordinately long, nearly 850 pages, and purports to give a minute, authoritative account of the whole tangled pychological skein of Tolstoy's long life. Laboriously, heavy-handedly, Mr. Simmons picks and unpicks, asserts and explains. But his book is almost entirely undocumented and, therefore, as a serious biography, has little value. On the other hand, its scale and style are such that one cannot imagine it acceptable as a "popular" biography. It falls hopelessly between the two stools.

And yet, despite these faults, one has to admit that one read the book with avidity. Once more Tolstoy has saved his biographer. The difficulty with most "great men," both for reader and biographer, is that every vestige and hint of their greatness, their individuality, fades away with them into the grave. But with Tolstoy nothing, not even Mr. Simmons's English, can obscure his monumental individuality, his superb absurdity, the acrid flavour of his thought and speech. When a Socialist, who did not like Tolstoy's condemnation of revolutionary violence, asked him whether there was no difference between killing done by a revolutionary and killing done by a policeman, Tolstoy replied: "As much difference as between cat-shit and dog-shit; but I don't like the smell of either." After Senator Andrew D. White, American Minister to Russia, had paid a visit to Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy asked the family whether they knew how the U.S.A. was governed. They said that they did not, and he said:

> Well, each state elects its wisest and best men to govern it, but the two very wisest and very best men from each state are sent to Washington to make the laws for the whole country. I have had one of these men with me today. He has learned all the sciences and knows all the languages and has read all the books—the only pity is that he has not yet begun to think.

And so it goes on, page after page—there is practically no word of Tolstoy which might be the word of anyone but Tolstoy; it is always Tolstoy and no one else. And there is something tremendous, something ravishing and completely unexpected, both in it and him. It is not merely the gigantic scale of the man, the vigour of his mind and speech; it is the unique combination in a single mind and character of every human contradiction. The personality of an ordinary person is disintegrated if he attempts to harbour in his mind or soul even a few contradictory emotions or beliefs; he exhibits the typical disruption of schizophrenia. With Tolstoy exactly the opposite took place. Somehow or other he managed, with superhuman strength, to weld all the psychological incompatibles that have plagued and tortured humanity into a superb work of art, Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, a character perfect in its combination of sublimity and ridiculousness. The incredible contradictions within him and the stature of the man himself have been recorded most vividly by Gorki in that short book of reminiscences which is one of the few masterpieces of biography. Tolstoy was interested in Gorki, but not really attracted by him; there is no sign of the kind of affection which he felt for Chehov and Sulerzhitski. And I do not think that Gorki liked or was even at his ease with Tolstoy. But Tolstoy made an immense impression on him, and the impact came at a moment when he was peculiarly receptive and creative, so that he was able in a few short notes and sketches to give a superb picture of both the massiveness and the infinite convolutions of Tolstoy's character.

Tolstoy began as a great artist, one of the greatest that has ever practised the art of European literature. The literary fairies gave him at birth every possible gift that an artist could desire. An infinitely fertile imagination, the essence of poetry, the most perfect sense of words, humour sparkling and profound, a mind of the finest quality, for it combined the greatest subtlety and intricacy of thought with the greatest directness and simplicity. These were his implements; what directed them was abnormal sensitivity, and it was this which produced *War and Peace*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and the greatest of all his masterpieces which he composed with such consummate dramatic art—the long tragic comedy of his own life. The kind of hypersensitiveness which Tolstoy possessed usually goes with a limitation, intensiveness, or even smallness of vision. It is the butterfly and the Prousts who are born with antennæ, not the elephant or the Balzacs. Tolstoy combined the most delicate sensitiveness with the mental stature of a giant and the cosmic vision of the Almighty. (One of the most remarkable contradictions in Tolstoy was that, though he devoted himself more and more to God, his relations with God were, as Gorki said, "very suspicious; they

sometimes remind me of the relation of 'two bears in one den'." The suspicion was, in fact, rather like that of one practitioner for a rival.) Wells compared Henry James to a hippopotamus perpetually and unsuccessfully trying to pick up a pea; Tolstoy might justly be compared to a hippopotamus born with the wings and antennæ of a butterfly.

Tolstoy, as everyone knows, renounced and denounced his art, and for the last part of his life tried to turn himself into a peasant. He remained, however, until his last dramatic and absurd journey to Astopovo railway station, in everything he wrote, said, or did, the artist. This complete contradiction in his mind and life would have disrupted the mind and destroyed the life of any ordinary person. But in the mind of God and of Tolstoy, the law of contradiction is impotent. Tolstoy was large enough to renounce and retain his art, to become a peasant and remain the author of *War and Peace*, to become a peasant and remain the aristocrat Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy. His monumental absurdity was always balanced by the most monumental common sense, and so, though everything he did or said might be ridiculous, it was also sublime.

LEONARD WOOLF

FALSE DIRECTIONS

The Psychology of Sex. By OSWALD SCHWARZ. *Pelican Books.* 1*s.* 6*d.*

Freedom of speech undoubtedly includes the right to speak and publish nonsense, even pernicious nonsense; but it is a right one would not wish to see too grossly abused. The responsibility for avoiding such abuses falls chiefly on the publishers; and Pelican Books have done a disservice both to their large public and to their deservedly high reputation by providing a wide circulation for the mixture of whimsy, misinformation, prejudice and inaccuracies which Dr. Oswald Schwarz has had the presumption to entitle *The Psychology of Sex*. One would have thought that normal modesty would have prevented the re-employment of the title of Havelock Ellis's pioneering studies by any follower in his footsteps. It must be presumed of course that Dr. Schwarz is aware of the existence of this work; there are, however, few signs that he is really conversant with much of the serious literature on sexual psychology published in the twentieth century.

Were it not for the title, the scientific claims advanced in the preface and elsewhere, and the probable wide circulation provided for Pelican books, this book could be dismissed in a few lines. If it had had some such title as *Musings on Love and Marriage* and had been published at half-a-guinea or more, it would have pleased the author and his friends and done little harm. Under existing circumstances, potential readers should be warned that this so-called *Psychology of Sex* does not take into account the well-established findings of modern psychology, physiology, biology, sociology or anthropology; that many of the statements presented as scientific facts are either not established or disproved; that many quotations are slightly inaccurate; that the ethical and moral standpoint is more representative of Imperial Vienna than of contemporary England; and that, as far as can be discovered by internal evidence or by the biographical information on the back cover, Dr. Schwarz does not possess adequate qualifications for writing authoritatively upon psychological subjects.

A native of Moravia, Dr. Schwarz took a medical degree in Vienna and practised as a genito-urinary surgeon, some time before the first world war. After that war he became a lecturer in Vienna, and while there attended some lectures in medical psychology by Alfred Adler and Paul Schilder. In 1934 he immigrated to this country.

It was presumably as a student that Dr. Schwarz read Plato and Hegel, from whom many of his ideas are, somewhat distantly, derived; and it seems probable that at the same time he read such "anthologizing" anthropologists as Westermarck and Bachhofen. As far as can be told from quotations and footnotes, Dr. Schwarz has only relied on three authors, generally recognized as scientific, who have been published in the last thirty years: Charlotte Buehler, Viola Klein and Margaret Mead. As he mentions Freud several times, usually with disapprobation, he must have read his works, but he certainly failed to understand them.

Dr. Schwarz would appear to be somewhat opposed to sex education but he is in favour of marriage. He has some quaint notions of what he calls stages to maturity; the normal development for a young man leads from masturbation, through youthful homosexuality, to the use of prostitutes (the "anonymous" woman), thence to affairs (woman "with a Christian name") and finally to marriage. This programme, as can be seen, must take some time; to allow for it Dr. Schwarz inveighs against early marriages: "Young marriages must be discouraged by all means because they carry in themselves the seeds of mistakes and failures... these conditions (of maturity) cannot be fulfilled by men before reaching an age of approximately 28 or by women younger than 25." One wonders why women must wait so long, for (says this expert) a normal woman should have no sexual experience of any sort before marriage: "nor are affairs essential for the development of a woman, because her development is very different from that of a man. A man develops, and not only in sex matters, from the stages of imperfection towards a state of perfection. The woman is, right from the beginning, 'perfect'... she only unfolds as the bud becomes the full flower." A slight problem is raised here: if every man's development needs affairs, and no woman needs them, whom are the men going to have affairs with? *Bei uns* they managed things better:

> In the halcyon days of Imperial Vienna there was a type of girl, working in offices and shops, selling flowers in the streets, simple, unpretentious creatures, who in their touching naivety considered the affair as their natural form of sex relationship. They refused material gain in any form, knew nothing of self-fulfilment or self-development, they enjoyed the present while it lasted, oblivious of any future: they wanted nothing but to love and to be loved in the purity and chastity of youth. When such an affair had come to an end, which they well knew must happen sooner or later, many a little heart was broken and died *un peu*. But when it was all over they married contentedly a friend of their schooldays or their neighbour's son, and the young student or lieutenant whom they once so hotly loved "for ever" was soon forgotten. These girls were very characteristic of Vienna... and these lines are written as a memorial to a bygone tradition and art of loving.

It would be unfair to suggest that the whole of this book contains such a high degree of psychological and sociological insight and literary flair as distinguishes this passage; after all, this is one of the places where Dr. Schwarz is treating material which he knows well. Should any one read the book under the forlorn hope that it contains erotically stimulating material, he can at least be comforted by the information that masturbation "is at this age (youth) normal... never causes any physical or mental harm... is... a tedious although necessary (*sic*) affair."

GEOFFREY GORER

STEPHEN HUDSON

A True Story. By STEPHEN HUDSON. *Falcon Press.* 25*s.*

Myrtle. By STEPHEN HUDSON. *Falcon Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Stephen Hudson's is not a name commonly met with in assessments of contemporary fiction or in the lists of "significant" novelists compiled by earnest critics. His novels were highly praised when they first appeared, but they were never popular, and they have been out of print for some

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THE GREY WALLS PRESS

years; the majority of readers likely to appreciate his work probably know him only as the man who took over the translating of Proust on Scott-Moncrieff's death. Yet he was an artist in his own right; he added something to the English novel, and no account of our fiction during the past thirty years would be complete without reference to him.

A True Story, the life-story of Richard Kurt, was first published in something like its present form in 1930. It consisted of three novels and part of a fourth, all of which had appeared separately under different titles, which the present publisher might surely have given us. The new edition contains a fifth part, published by itself in 1937, and an epilogue hitherto unpublished. *Myrtle*, which presents Kurt's second wife, may be taken as an extended foot-note to the larger work, since its final chapter, describing their meeting, forms the penultimate section of *A True Story*. A third novel, *Tony*, giving us Kurt through the eyes of his ne'er-do-well brother, has yet to appear.

Hudson's theme throughout the books that make up *A True Story* is that of estrangement. But Richard Kurt's estrangement exists on two levels. There is the psychological estrangement:

> As he sat in that self-same spot, with incredible vividness his life unrolled itself, step by step and link by link; his brief childhood, his schooldays, his youth, his marriage and her [his mother's] death. And through it all loomed the sombre figure of his father, ever standing between him and his mother, robbing him of his birthright of happiness. . .

Then there is estrangement at the level of sublimation. At eighteen Kurt notes:

> When I was small, Nanny Clifford and Fraulein Schwind always said I was discontented. It was true, I am discontented and I am afraid I always shall be because whether I'm right or wrong, I know I want something in every way different from what I've got or ever can get. Looking back, I can see that I was always like that. Certainly there are things I liked that other people liked, some books, some games, riding, hunting, rowing, swimming, but only one side of me liked them, not the whole of me. There was always an inside me that wanted something besides entirely different, something that couldn't be explained or done and that wasn't known to me by any particular name, and that I seemed to have had some time or other and that all sorts of things reminded me of, like the scent of a flower or the rustle of leaves or a broad sunbeam or the glistening of a calm sea when the sun sets. Looking back on my life, I see it like a river separated almost from its source into two streams which keep getting wider apart. And I see that everything I have done all my life, everything I have to do, has widened that angle and that everything always will widen it. And yet I don't think it ought to be widened. There ought to be some way or other of making these two streams meet again but I don't think I shall ever discover it or if I do, only after many, many years, and by then it may be too late.

Viewed simply as a study of the Oedipus Complex working like a doom through a man's life, there is no parallel to *A True Story* in our fiction except *Sons and Lovers*. But the difference between the two novels is, of course, profound and extreme. Lawrence takes sides in the triangular warfare, he identifies himself with Paul Morel; Hudson gives the impression of being wholly outside his material, of being completely objective. True, we are presented only with Richard Kurt's point of view, but it would be impossible from the book alone to identify him with his creator. Above all, Kurt's mother, unlike Paul's, is unobtainable; he is rejected by her. Then there is the enormous technical difference between the two novels. *Sons and Lovers* is in the tradition of the chronicle-novel of Bennett; *A True Story*, as the first pages indicate, is post-Joyce; Hudson has learnt from *A Portrait of the Artist*. No less striking is the difference in *milieu*. Richard Kurt is the son of an Anglo-Austrian financier, a member of an international banking family, and his frustrations are worked out against the background of fashion and finance in Europe and America during the Nineties and the Edwardian era.

Technically, Hudson's method remains interesting. He avoids the *longueurs* of the chronicle novel by taking up and dwelling upon his hero's life at certain points; and he writes always with great economy. The first part of the book—a matter of ninety pages in the new edition—covers Kurt's life from early infancy to the age of eighteen and is told in the first person, growth being indicated by the gradual development in the narrator's complexity of language and sentence-structure. Thus, through young Kurt's steadily expanding consciousness we see his family, the relationship between his parents, his experiences at public school and at crammers abroad and in England. The second part of the book is twice the length of the first, but covers a single year, when Kurt is nineteen. This part seems to me of quite extraordinary interest; indeed, I know nothing quite like it in either English or American fiction, for in it Kurt describes his life in a rapidly growing Middle West town, where he works in the office of his American uncle, the president of a railroad. It is an astonishingly detailed picture of life in all its vulgarity, violence and corruption in a provincial American city during the "Gilded Age," the kind of thing, one feels, that W. D. Howells would have done if he had had greater courage and had known how, but written with a directness, an immediacy of experience and also with a sense of contrast to European civilisation that Howells was incapable of.

These first two parts form a wonderfully vivid and exact picture of the childhood and adolescence of a sensitive youth during two of the most fascinating settings of modern times, the Eighties and Nineties in England and the very different Nineties of the aggressive industrial frontier of America. Then on, the book seems to me less interesting. The third part, told in the third person, and a long short story rather than a novel, relates how Kurt, still a youth, is trapped into marriage by a beautiful, cold, ambitious American girl, Elinor Colhouse, who is looking for a rich European husband. Brilliant though the section is, in the light of the work as a whole it is a flaw, for Elinor is presented with such bitter irony that one feels Hudson has loaded the dice against her. Her beauty apart, Elinor has no redeeming qualities; her behaviour after their marriage widens the estrangement between Kurt and his father; and in the fourth part of the book alienation between her and Kurt is almost complete. Despite its excellences, the sharp vignettes of cosmopolitan society, the beauty of the descriptions of the Italian landscape, I find this section over-long; with Kurt frustrated at every turn, it is difficult not to see him, for all his searching for something to live by, as merely an unusually sensitive and intelligent member of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's herd of "dumb oxen"; he has become the passive character to whom things happen, who does not make them happen. Yet in the last part of the book, he does surmount his frustrations, he does liberate himself from Elinor; through Myrtle. Myrtle remains shadowy; deliberately so; in the novel that bears her name we never see her directly but only through the impressions she makes on others, on her nurse, governess, elder sister, an assortment of men young and old who have fallen in love with her. She is a symbol, of beauty, serenity, of wisdom, of that "something that couldn't be explained." But in fiction a symbol is convincing only when it is enshrined in character, and Myrtle never emerges as a character.

If *A True Story* is judged as a single novel it cannot, I think, be considered a success. It would seem from the way in which Hudson published his work that his method of composition was one of accretion. The separate parts of the book are brilliantly written and designed, but strung out in sequence they do not form a whole. One is aware all the time of a lack of proportion between the parts. And then Kurt himself is hardly a powerful enough character to carry the book. He has intimations of other worlds, but he cannot express them. He ought, the conclusion seems inescapable, to have been either a

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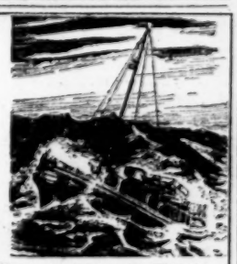

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poet or a mystic, for the intimations are such as can only be conveyed in the language of poetry or mysticism. One is saying, of course, that Hudson himself should have been a poet. Yet for all its structural faults, its failure in communication, *A True Story* remains one of the most impressive works of fiction of this century. Certainly of the first half of the book it can be said that, once read, it will not easily be forgotten; and its subtleties, reticences and accuracy of observation are such that, once read, it will be returned to again and again.

WALTER ALLEN

EMILY DUCHESS

Emily Duchess of Leinster. By BRIAN FITZGERALD. *Staples Press.* 15s.

The first Duchess of Leinster, mother of the ill-fated Lord Edward FitzGerald, the Irish patriot, aunt of the great Charles James Fox, and sister of that Lady Sarah Lennox who nearly became Queen of England by captivating young King George III, had none of those obvious qualities that endear women to historians and biographers. She was not an eccentric like Lady Hester Stanhope, nor a blue-stocking like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, nor a politician like Lady Holland, nor a King's mistress like Lady Yarmouth: in spite of her beauty and charm she was not even an unfaithful wife like the Duchess of Devonshire or Lady Bessborough or Lady Melbourne or . . . but that list would be endless. On the contrary she shone out among her fellows as a pattern of domestic virtue. Could anything sound duller than the placid life of a virtuous Duchess—and in the eighteenth century of all periods?

Such preliminary misgiving will soon be dissipated by reading Mr. Brian FitzGerald's book. The letters of the FitzGerald family, lying hitherto unpublished in the National Library of Ireland at Dublin, are the main source on which he draws for this life of his great-great-grandmother. And these simple documents, although largely concerned with everyday details of running a big house and a troop of children, reveal such a sympathetic character, such warmth of affection and Irish high spirits, that no one could be dull for a moment in the company of Emily Duchess and her large family.

Large the family undoubtedly was. Emily was married at the age of fifteen, and gave birth to nineteen children by her first husband and three by her second, most of whom survived infancy. This feat of parturition does not seem to have impressed her contemporaries. A child a year was all in the day's work for a wife in those days. Emily certainly took childbirth in her stride. "I am a tough old piece of goods" she assured her eldest son when well over sixty. And so she must have been, for she attended balls up to the age of seventy-five, and was found enjoying "wonderful health" at eighty.

"Dear, dear Eddy" was the favourite of her children; and she was Lord Edward's favourite of all women: the letters exchanged between mother and son read almost like those of lovers. Even when Lord Edward eventually brought off his marriage with Pamela after many abortive flirtations with other women, he made a strange promise to his mother that she should be given his first born child if it proved to be a son. The child was a son; and before he was two years old this little Eddy was packed off to his grandmother as a permanent gift, to keep his father's bargain that Emily should never be without an Eddy, if he could help it.

The Duchess was kept in ignorance of the plans for the Irish Rebellion of 1798. But the favourite daughter, Lucy, was over in Ireland with her brother Edward, organising the United Irishmen. From her secret diary we learn that her code name among the conspirators was "Good Heart." Politics, however, were not really her *métier*: she was more interested in Arthur O'Connor than the capture of Dublin Castle. After the failure of the rising and her brother's death "Good Heart's" share in the plot was never betrayed to the Government, and Lucy was free to go on with her love affairs. But the range of her romantic attachments was unpredictable. It was not an Irish revolutionary that she married in the end, but one of Nelson's handsome sea-captains who led the Fleet at the Battle of the Nile.

The Duchess's second marriage came as a severe test of her family's affection. Never was there a worse *mésalliance*! Her first husband had been the premier Duke of Ireland, and she had been Ireland's "uncrowned queen": her second, a Mr. Ogilvie, was an ugly, rawboned Scotsman, with a strong Scottish accent and bushy eyebrows, who had originally been engaged as tutor to the younger FitzGerald children. The circumstances of Mr. Ogilvie's arrival on the scene are on record.

> The groom of the chamber came in and announced that the new tutor Mr. Ogilvie, was come. "Show him to his room," said the Duchess. "Please, your Grace, is he to have wax candles or tallow?" the butler asked. Upon which Emily turned to Lady Leitrim and said in French: "Qu'en pensez vous?" "Oh, moulds will do, till we see a little?"

Seven years later it was not a question what candles Mr. Ogilvie was to have, but whether he should have the Duchess. The Duke of Leinster died of dropsy in November, 1773: and within eight months of his death a rumour went round that the Duchess was going to marry the tutor. Rumour was right for once: three months later the marriage took place in the South of France.

There can be no stronger testimony to Emily's irresistible charm than the behaviour of her relations on this inauspicious occasion. Her eldest son, William, the new Duke, wrote: "I confess my pride is hurt, and I am sorry for it," but he would never give his dearest mother up, although he would never feel happy when he met Mr. Ogilvie. Her brother, the Duke of Richmond, simply said: "There is no resisting her." Her sister said more: "You hurt your rank in the world, that is all you do; and if you gain happiness by it, I am sure you make a good exchange, and it would be very hard indeed if your friends were not satisfied with that." Even her first husband's mother, old Lady Kildare, condescended to say: "I hope that you will be happy in the choice you made (tho', let me add, rather early)," before recommending her daughter-in-law a new eye-lotion.

Nobody in 1774 could understand the infatuation, and nobody can today; for Mr. Ogilvie was a most rebarbative fellow. Probably Emily had such a loving disposition that she was obliged to love whomever she was with. She was thrown into Ogilvie's arms simply because those were the first arms presented to her. At any rate the Duchess never regretted her choice, though it meant exchanging the great house in Kildare for French lodgings and a cottage at Wimbledon. Mr. Ogilvie, indeed, after marriage, showed a great ambition to rise in society. He elbowed his way to Court, buttonholed the aristocracy and made speeches in the Irish House of Commons. But however well he rubbed his bony hands or knitted his heavy brows, he never made much impression. His only deviation from nonentity was when he made Emily love him.

Charm, as artists find to their cost, is the most elusive quality to depict. Neither of the two

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Reynolds portraits does the Duchess justice. The face is infinitely kind but insipid; and the painter is said to have laid down his brushes in despair with the words, "It does not please me yet." Mr. Brian FitzGerald, using a different medium, has let the lady paint her own portrait in words; and *Emily Duchess of Leinster* succeeds, where Sir Joshua failed. RALPH PARTRIDGE

HISTORICAL DETECTION

The Mystery of "A Public Man." By FRANK MALOY ANDERSON. *Minnesota University Press. Geoffrey Cumberlege.* 21s.

The scent of a literary forger or an anonymous author is enough to send some people chasing off through archives like enthusiastic beaglers at the start of a day's run. Checked, they cast around, pick up fresh traces and are off again in another direction. The hunt may last for years. A. J. A. Symons told us that his Quest for Corvo took up most of 1926 and 1927. But he made his kill comparatively quickly. Professor Anderson has been after his quarry, on and off, since 1913. It is a tribute to his zeal and ingenuity that he has now finally tracked him down. In this fascinating book, which deserves to become a classic of historical detection, we can follow this unflagging pursuit through the by-ways of American history.

In 1879, the *North American Review* published some extracts from a diary kept, in the editor's words, by "a public man" during the Secession Winter of 1860–61. Although the author's identity was never revealed and although historians have had a fine game trying to guess it, its authenticity has been generally accepted. Indeed, most biographers of Lincoln have depended on it as the only source for several of his epigrams and for a number of striking anecdotes about him. It draws a brilliant picture of the political life of Washington on the eve of the Civil War. Here is Lincoln telling the author "You know, Sumner is just my idea of a bishop", the author in turn reporting to the President some intelligence about Fort Sumter, Douglas dropping in to discuss Cabinet appointments, Seward telling of his hopes for a settlement with the Confederacy. As the chief actors in that anxious scene played out their parts, the diarist moved among them, jotting down a confidence, an apt judgment, an action or appearance that caught his eye. Clearly, the author was himself an important man. But who was he?

At the outset of his inquiry, Mr. Anderson decided that the diary might be one of three different things: a genuine diary; a clever forgery; or a subsequent revision of notes made at the time. Over the years, he explored each of these possibilities in turn.

First, he discovered that none of the people mentioned in the diary who were still alive when it was published had been able to place the author. He then turned to the internal evidence it afforded. It had been written by a man who was in Washington on twenty days between December 28th, 1860, and March 15, 1861, and who was in New York on February 20th, 1861, these being the dates of the published extracts. At first, Mr. Anderson followed up the lead of Professor Johnson of Yale, who had deduced that the diarist was a New Englander, a former Whig, a Senator and, at the time he wrote, a Republican. But, carefully checking the movements of Senators and, to be sure, Representatives, on the given dates, he decided that the author did not sit in Congress. He also found that there was no conclusive evidence that the diarist was from New England.

This was but the beginning. At this stage, Mr. Anderson drew up a list of eighteen requirements with which any strong candidate must comply, ranging from his height—Lincoln, he had said, asked him if he had measured backs with Sumner, a tall man—to his knowledge of patents, French political thought, his friendship with Douglas, his dislike of Senator Baker of Oregon and his knowledge of the postal service. Three men seemed, at first to fit the bill. The first, after some trouble, had to be eliminated when Mr. Anderson turned up a letter written by him from Washington on the day the diarist was in New York. Similar evidence disposed of the other two. Then Mr. Anderson hit on a most intriguing suspect—Amos Kendall, the partner of Samuel Morse, President Jackson's ghost writer, former postmaster-general, and in all a man of wealth, culture and distinction. He met virtually all the requirements and the search seemed at an end—provided he was in New York on that one day. Burrowing deep, Mr. Anderson finally unearthed a list of hotel guests at the Astor House on that February night. Sure enough, there was a Kendall. Although the initial was wrong, that might be a misprint. But, hot on the scent, Mr. Anderson then discovered that Kendall was certainly in New York a week later, on the night of February 27th. Checking the railway timetable, he found that Kendall could not possibly have reached Washington in time for the interview with Lincoln noted in the diary for the next day. That, with some supplementary evidence, disposed of this most promising trail.

After this, Mr. Anderson turned to the second theory. He had already begun to have doubts about the authenticity of the diary. Though he could not find any obvious anachronisms, he noted the remarkably felicitous judgments of the famous men the author met—judgments, and stories, so apt that they seemed too brilliant for even a superb diarist to make right off the cuff. There were odd omissions—of names, places, times, none important in itself but enough to create a cumulative impression on a man suspicious as Mr. Anderson had by now become. It looked as though the diarist was taking extraordinary care to cover his tracks at any point where it was possible to check what he wrote. Too little of his material was "controlled" by other evidence. It appeared that there was virtually no proof of anything the diarist said, wherever he differed from other contemporary accounts. When he reported an incident arising from Lincoln's visit to the opera, other reporters described that visit but unanimously omitted that specific incident. By this time, Mr. Anderson had become convinced the diary was written at a much later date. After all, it did make mistakes—the business about taking the morning train from Washington to Richmond, for instance, when there was no direct line in 1861—and, the more doubtful Mr. Anderson became, the more holes he found in the whole work.

But, if it was a forgery, who was the forger? Away goes Mr. Anderson again, turning up the most strange characters. "Chevalier" Wikoff, wealthy philanderer, spy for Palmerston, kidnapper, man of affairs? William Henry Hurlbert, sometime editorial writer for the *New York Times*, a "Théophile Gautier in a democratic society," defendant in a sensational English trial for seduction? No, says Mr. Anderson, both these men would have made recognisable and serious blunders. Neither of them, moreover, would have been painstaking enough to do the necessary research. Then, perhaps, it was Allen Thorndike Rice himself, the editor of the *North American Review*? Again, Mr. Anderson dangles a solution before us and snatches it away, though by this time he definitely suspects Rice of complicity in a fraud of some kind.

Then the third of Mr. Anderson's original hypotheses was right? The book is a later revision of an original but meagre diary kept by an important figure in Washington society? Yes: but it is bogus. The genuine material that is left is so slender as to make the diary completely

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untrustworthy as an historical source. Who wrote it? Who revised it? That, I am afraid, the rules of the game forbid me to reveal. But Mr. Anderson leaves the reader with no doubt that he has finally run the culprit to earth. And a most interesting and unexpected person it turns out to be. Is the subject matter of this book a little distant and specialised for the average reader in this country? That is immaterial. What matters is the account of the chase and the insight into the technique of historical detection that it offers. These have made Mr. Anderson one of my favourite detectives.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

NEW NOVELS

Samara. By NORMAN LEWIS. *Cape.* 9*s.*
Born of the Sun. By G. A. WAGNER. *Falcon Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
Roads from Home. By DAN DAVIN. *Michael Joseph.* 9*s.* 6*d.*
Our Gifted Son. By DOROTHY BAKER. *Gollancz.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

An affection for the Arabs, and an affection for provincial France, both profound and sincere, but both, in different ways, a little patronising, are English traditions. *Eothen*, with its comic-dignified conversations, and its "body of waters about equal to the Thames at Eton," set the tone for the Middle East. And on the other side there is the *maire* with his *tricolore* sash and bootlace tie; not quite real, but how familiar, how comic, how touchingly dear. Mr. Lewis has found him again in French North Africa, but something has happened to his background. The little French towns, painstaking copies of originals in Provence or Normandy, seem to decay in the heat; they develop native quarters, exotic vegetation; they become African. The Arabs may be dressed in old sacks, but this is ineluctably their country. It can't be turned into France; the *douceur de province* won't grow in the desert. Mr. Lewis's Algeria is a country through which war has flooded and ebbed, leaving a debris of tough, nostalgic colonial officers, nerve-ridden gangsters, pimps (the word *maison* has completely lost its original meaning) and pashas who lead a life of grotesquely ritualised leisure. The life of the ordinary village Arabs is conducted, with infinite difficulty, under this debris.

Out of this situation Mr. Lewis, the author of *Samara*, has conjured a novel which is brilliantly fantastic, non-realistic but convincing, violent, cruel and funny. About the Arabs he writes with sympathy, and with a kind of understanding which is prepared to take on trust a good deal that is incomprehensible. Langland, the hero of the book, the last British officer in Algeria (with an idiotic remnant of a job) cares deeply about the Arabs. He wants to protect them from the violence which is the outcome of the colonial situation and its profound misunderstandings. This is an impossible task; what happens can't be prevented by the decency and good will of one individual, and if Mr. Lewis had done fuller justice to this theme *Samara* might have been tragic as well as funny. This however would have been the achievement of a master, and we cannot quarrel with Mr. Lewis because he has not written a masterpiece. What he has written is a first novel which displays an unusual combination of talent and maturity.

Mr. Wagner also writes about Algeria, and about gangsters, but the atmosphere of *Born of the Sun* is very different from that of *Samara*. The publishers say that the influence of contemporary French writers is evident in his work, but the influences which can detect are already imperfectly contemporary. Simenon and Montherlant; yes: but who else? After a moment the name comes back—Maurice Dekobra. As to Montherlant, I seem to remember an incident in which Costals refers to a marine organism, the male of which has its entire being within the genital organs of the female: he then triumphantly remarks: "I am that organism." There is something about *Born of the Sun* which reminds me of this remark. Mr. Wagner's themes are sex and crime, and he plugs them pretty hard in a book which is a rather unpleasant mixture of the highbrow and the romance-cum-thriller. Yet it is by no means altogether bad; the study of Dr. Marie Gériand and her successive lovers provides moments of insight, and the whole thing might have been unusual and interesting if it were not so overwritten. But it is not merely the fact that it is overwritten which spoils this book; it is the feeling which it gives that some genuine talent has been shoved in with a lot of other stuff and sold in the bargain basement.

If Algeria is something of a gift to the novelist, a New Zealand small town in the year 1937 might appear to be one of those tough and challenging subjects which, in the right hands, can also produce good novels. Mr. Davin's should be the right hands. He has already established a considerable reputation as a writer, and he is writing about the place where he grew up, a subject to which so many writers have brought a passionate absorption and a stimulating ambiguity of feeling. *Roads from Home* accordingly aroused considerable expectations.

Placed against those expectations it is a disappointing book. As a picture of the town it is good; it gives one a sense of the *kind* of people who live there, of their corporate life. But the individual characters, particularly the main ones, are much less good; they are neither sufficiently representative nor sufficiently individual, and the plot is a poor affair, involving an unfaithful wife, a decent ordinary husband, a slick seducer, and a young man uncertain about his priestly vocation. Mr. Davin writes well enough to make one read on, but at a superficial level of interest, and, even so, one's progress is impeded by the philosophising (if it can be dignified by that name) of Ned, whose ideas and religious difficulties are exceedingly banal. I have said "writes well enough" but the book is without distinction of style, and Mr. Davin, although he suggests a strain of Celtic poetry in his characters, is content with some talk which is picturesque and racy only in a conventional way.

Miss Dorothy Baker is the author of *Young Man with a Horn*, a book which told the story of a jazz trumpet player and received a good deal of attention when it was published before the war. It was a noteworthy study of the jazz milieu and the devoted monomania which jazz inspires. *Our Gifted Son* is much less satisfactory. It concerns José Richter, son of a wealthy Mexican family living in Las Palmas in an atmosphere of hothouse devotion not unlike the climate of the town. Ted Carpenter, whom José brings with him from Harvard for a holiday, represents a blast of cold air, and the rest of the book is about the consequences of letting it in. As a piece of drama and psychological observation it is adequate; what I take exception to is its style. An idiom which was suitable for dealing with illiterate jazz musicians ten years ago has decayed into a pseudo-colloquial, preciously laconic mannerism. Here is a piece of dialogue:

"Go see her sometime," José said, "and ask her to show you her pictures."

"She a painter?"

"No she collects painters, and then they give her their pictures. Hell, I don't know, maybe she buys them."

"What kind of pictures?"

"Mexican. Very extremely Mexican. You never saw such pictures. One after another. If she still has them."

The dead hand of Hemingway; now that the best young American writers have at last decisively thrown it off, it has come to seem intolerably affected.

J. D. SCOTT

Science in Liberated Europe. J. G. CROWTHER. *Pilot Press.* 18*s.*

Science on the continent of Europe is still severely handicapped by the effects of the war. Research suffered in many ways. There was the Nazi oppression which in countries such as Poland meant the deliberate destruction of centres of experiment and learning and the cold-blooded extermination of the intelligentsia. In countries where genocide was less ruthlessly practised, the Germans had always the excuse that scientists were the experts, and often the leaders, of Resistance and qualified for the firing-squad and the concentration camp. Where laboratories were not pillaged for the benefit of the German war-effort, they were starved of essential equipment. But in science, which can only flourish internationally, the effect of being cut off from outside contacts was almost as serious as the direct intervention of the Nazis. Occupied Europe emerged from the scientific limbo to find itself in the Atomic Age, with science accelerating at a pace which made it difficult to catch up.

Just what the war meant to scientists in France, Denmark, Holland and Czechoslovakia, is recounted by that able science-writer and observer, J. G. Crowther, who visited scientists and institutions after Liberation, meeting or mourning old friends. He collected accounts of research-activities which persisted in spite of all oppression and adversity (and it is surprising how much individual good work was done) but the book will be valued as a popular, historical record more of how scientists worked than of what they achieved. For here is a picture of the underground struggle not only for freedom of scientific experiment and expression but in militant Resistance as well. It is an inspiring tribute to the courage and resourcefulness of men and women, whose names resound in the scientific world, and who in anonymity and peril, equipped and led the Underground. The book would have been more effective if its publication had not been so long delayed and if it had included the other countries of Occupied Europe as well but, all the same, it is an indispensable record.

Edward Arlington Robinson. By EMERY NEFF. American Men of Letters Series. *Methuen.* 15*s.*

The qualifications for this series are far lower than those for our "English Men of Letters," and Robinson would never even have reached the short list for a place on this side of the Atlantic. Nevertheless his poems have an unassuming authenticity that stands out in that dim first decade of this century which one thinks of as the age of Stephen Phillips. His dramatic monologues, with their ironic restraint and their puritan flatness of line, bridge a gap between "Mr. Sludge the Medium" and the country sentiment of Robert Frost. All the time-honoured details of the "Literary Life" are here: the family background of dogged rye-soaked failure, the harvest of rejection slips, the bohemian circle and the respectable sinecure, given him by Theodore Roosevelt out of a real appreciation of Robinson's work. This was the first step towards a considerable measure of recognition, won without compromising the quality of his poetry. The man stands out, in his dubiously arty surroundings, as one who always and unfailingly put his craft before everything. Too much of this book is taken up with details of reviews and lists of possible influences, but the copious quotations from the poetry itself leave one in no doubt that Robinson is a genuine and modest candidate for poetic survival.

An Englishman looks at
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HAMLET and town all agree—
there's not a ghost of a chance of finding a better cigar at the price than King Six (1/7 each).

Week-end Competitions

No. 1,005

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Restoration dramatists used to give their characters names expressive of their personalities (e.g., Lady Sneerwell, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy). The usual prizes are offered for the *dramatis personæ*, named in this way for a modern play, suitably named, set in either Whitehall or a University city. Entries by May 31st.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,002

Set by Richard Lister.

The usual prizes are offered for a set of three new proverbs which could have come into use only in this century.

Report by R. Lister.

There were originally two sources of proverbs, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (of which a second edition has lately appeared). "One was the common man from whom came the proverbs of distilled experience. The other was the wise man or oracle, whose utterances were the result of reflection . . ." The entries fell largely into the second category when they weren't merely parodies of familiar proverbs. In principle I was against these last but several of the wittier in the end persuaded me to allow them. Of course it is not merely the inclusion of twentieth-century products and inventions in the text that makes a twentieth-century proverb. We have also attitudes and views, which, if they were conceivable in previous ages, were in no danger of becoming widespread enough to get themselves expressed in proverbs. To get at these was the refinement of this competition.

I quote a number of individual proverbs before the six prize-winners to whom go one guinea each.

The take-off is as good as the touch-down.
GEORGE VALE

Only birds and fools fly. DOREEN E. LASSMAN

Better be a self-starter than a stubborn crank.
HASSALL PITMAN

Give him a Minton for his Munnings. W. STEWART

All third and no light makes Jack a ghastly blight.
D. H.

People who have no house should be skilful in contraception. PETER SHELDON

The Sky is no place for angels.
Red herrings swim best in Fleet Street.
J. T. PRICE

It's waste of breath to boo the television.
J. C. B. DATE

Look after the dollars, the pounds will look after themselves. J. P. MARRIOTT

If you seek the truth look not at the headlines but in the obituary column. GRANVILLE GARLEY

Born with a winning football coupon in his mouth.
J. S.

No man is worth more than £8,500 a year—and allowances.
If at first you don't deceive, lie, lie again.
JAS. J. NEVIN

Every Matisse has his Munnings. J. R. TILL

A patriot is known by his income-tax returns.
ARNOLD S. LEWIS

Only a chump expects a chop. J. G. BOWEN

He listens most who switches off at times.
G. S. DIXON

The worst announcer may broadcast the best news.
E. W. FORDHAM

Four Aways can spoil a Home. E. M. BARKER

A girl in your arms is worth two on the screen.
E. H. STRAUSS

A true answer takes more than twenty questions.
H. V. S. PAGE

It's a wise child that knows his own donor.
L. E. J.

As noisy as a University city. J. R. TILL

PRIZES.

The ration always looks smaller to the Opposition.
It's a wise kid that knows his own Id.
The power-cut comes on the coldest morning.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

A wise fellow-traveller buys a return ticket.
Iron curtains erected by amateur bricklayers may prove hard to pull down.
Cold wars may boil over before fingers are burned.
DR. LEON M. SHIRLAW

Red Tape wins no Blue Riband.
There's a technical hitch
At every last ditch.
The portals of paradise are not prefabricated.
HAIG NORMAN

Man proposes, but Freud discloses.
Take care of the blurb, and the book will look after itself.
A Kierkegaard for a Sartre.
D. N. DALGLISH

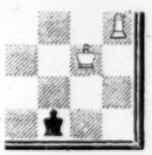
The worst art is the best.
Parents should be seen and not heard.
All motives are disgusting: ultimate motives are absolutely disgusting. FERGIE

The childless family catches the flat.
Union grows, work slows.
The brighter the cap, the higher the fees.
A. K. HUDSON

CHESS: Coin a Word for Zugzwang

IN chess, just as in life, to-day's bliss may be to-morrow's poison. In life, just as in chess, the cravings of our youth may be anathema at a later stage of the game.

Think of the element of Time in chess: how precious is the *tempo*, how urgent the right to move all through the developing stage of the game. How often do we face catastrophe for the lack of one single *tempo*. How easily we could snatch triumph from disaster if only we were allowed one little extra move.

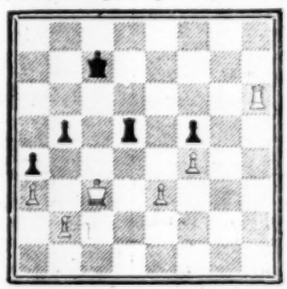


Yet, at a later stage of the game the blessing of the *tempo* may well turn into a burden, and the right to move may become a painful duty. Take as simple a position as this.

By playing R-K4, White forces the enemy King to the one square where he is mated forthwith. If only the King could say: "I will not budge, I stay put unless checked," he would be quite safe. Even with so elementary a preponderance as a Rook against the naked King you could never win by mere checking. The *coup-de-grace* (immediately prior to the mate) will be a non-checking move contriving for the poor fish, on his own accord, to jump into the net held out to catch him. So long as there is life in him he *must* move, even unto death.

This onus of the move is a most important aspect of end-game technique, and chess players all over the world know it by the German term *zugzwang*. A guinea chessbook token for the best effort at coining an English synonym. (Entries by May 30th.)

Here is a pretty example. (Alekhine-Yates, Hamburg, 1910) of the *zugzwang* lash in action.



White, though a Pawn up, obviously cannot win, unless he can force an exchange of Rooks.

White	*Black*
(1) R-K6	K-Q2
(2) R-K5	R x R
(3) P x R	

Now, if Black were to play K-K3, White would win quite easily by K-Q4, forcing the Black King to retreat (*Zugzwang!*), and his own King pushing on to Q5. That is why Yates played

(3) ..... K-K2!

A good move: for if now White were rash enough to play the obvious K-Q4 he would throw away the win by giving Black the chance of K-K3, securing at least a draw. Work out for yourself how, by gobbling up Black's Q-side pawns White would promote his own QKt P. only just ahead of Black's KB P. If, however, instead of (5) K-B5 White were to play P-K4, Black would push his BP to the 5th and actually win. For by now White would be suffering from *Zugzwang* rather than inflicting it (and he could do no gobbling on the Q-side).

That's why Alekhine played (4) K-Q3. Now again, if Yates had countered by K-K3 he would have been forced into a disastrous retreat by White's K-Q4. So Yates played

(4) K-Q2
(5) P-K4! P-B5.

To take the P would be tantamount to suicide

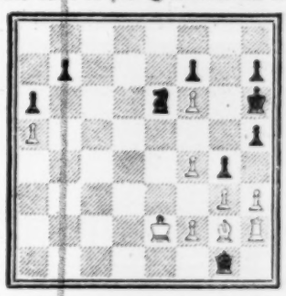
(6) K-K2!

Threatening K-B3 and thus forcing Black to play

(6) K-K3
(7) K-B2!!

After this subtle move of Alekhine's his opponent resigned. For if Yates had taken the P Alekhine would have replied K-B3, winning easily. Yet, if instead of (7) K-B2 Alekhine had played K-B3 he would have lost the game; deservedly so, for having gratuitously handed the *Zugzwang* lash to his opponent.

To be the Q down (indeed to have not a single piece left) and yet to be able to announce a Mate in 6—even this can be achieved at the crack of the *Zugzwang* whip. Dr. Perlis did it when (having conceded the odds of the Q) he reached this position



(1) P-B5	Q x R

Black obligingly steps into the trap

(2) K-B1	Kt-Kt4
(3) P-R4	Kt-R6
(4) B x Kt	Q x B ch ??

Unable to resist the lure of a check he misses his last chance.

(5) K-Kt1 and mates in (at most) six moves.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1

First prize, H. Ainsworth. Second prize divided between R. A. Slade and H. Lobbenberg. There were many ingenious entries, though some competitors made poor Snatch more of a fool than he ought to be. Here is the winning score.

(1) P-K4	P-K4	(10) B x B	P-Q3
(2) P-Q4	P x P	(11) P-K5	Q-Q2
(3) P-QB3	P x P	(12) Kt-Kt5	P x P
(4) B-QB4	P x P	(13) Kt-K6 ch	K-K2
(5) QB x P	Q-Kt4	(14) Q-B3	K-Q3
(6) Kt-KB3	Q x P	(15) B-B8 ch	Kt-K2
(7) R-Kt1	Q-R6	(16) Q-R3 ch	K-Q4
(8) B x P ch	K-Q1	(17) Kt-B3 ch	K-B5
(9) R x P	B x R	(18) Q Kt3 ch	K-Q6
		(19) 0-0-0	mate

Since it appears that there is already a Caissa writing about chess, I had better put myself in reverse and henceforth be known as ASSIAC